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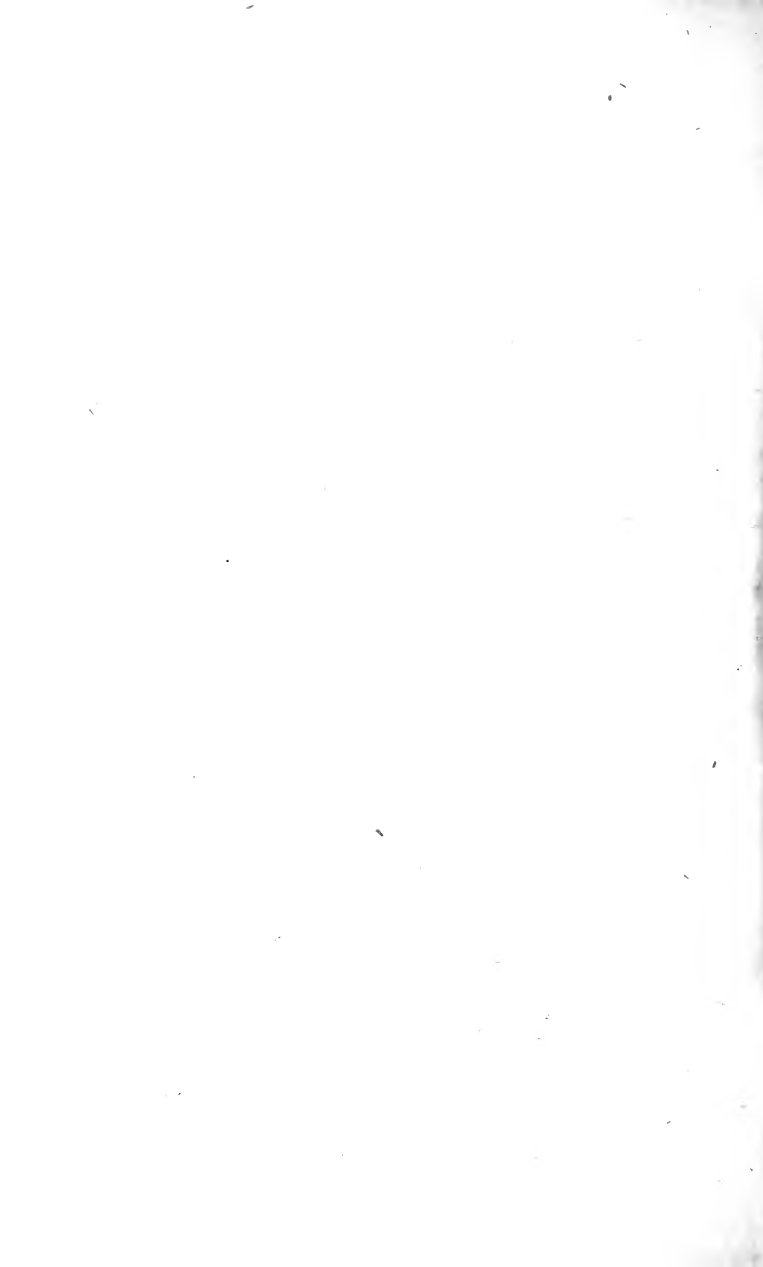
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HOME AND HEAVEN:

5631.C

A BOOK OF

THOUGHTS AND SKETCHES.

BY

MRS. M. E. M. SANGSTER.



PUBLISHED BY THE
AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,
28 CORNHILL, BOSTON.

1868

BV4501
S33

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P R E F A C E.

THE following pages were written at intervals, during several busy years. If the thoughts which they contain make one earthly home the happier, or lead one household to look up in faith and love to that "holy city, new Jerusalem," which the dearest of the apostles saw "coming down from God out of heaven," I shall be glad and grateful. For what can we wish for the Christian's home, more than that it be a preparation for, and an emblem of, that better place, the Father's house, where our Intercessor now stands, where wait for us the beloved ones who once made our pathway bright, where we hope ere long to join the great company of the redeemed?

Till that time comes, let "Heaven and Home" be talismanic sounds, fraught with power to make us braver, stronger, and purer, as we follow on to know the Lord.

M. E. M.



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HOME AND HEAVEN.



I.

THE AGED MOTHER.

PAINTING and poetry have done their best to perpetuate the beauty of the young mother. There is no lovelier sight in the world than a youthful matron, the rose of girlhood still flushing her cheek and the light of youth and happiness shining in her eyes, bending over her babe, soothing him to his quiet sleep, pillowing his head upon her loving breast.

But a sacredness, a halo that does not belong to the other, pertains to the aged mother. Her hands, once white and dimpled, are withered now, and tremulous ; her step, once firm and elastic, is now feeble and uncertain ; her

eyes are dim, and her voice quivering and low. She has borne the burden and heat of the day, and is now waiting amid the evening shadows for the voice of the Master, that shall bid her enter into rest. Years ago, one by one, her "bairns" came; they were carried in her arms, they slept upon her heart. She sang their cradle songs, and soothed their cradle fears. She taught them to walk, and led them by the hand to God's house. As they grew onward and upward to man's and woman's estate, she was ever their counselor, and confidant, and friend. No wildness, nor sinfulness, nor coldness, nor bitterness, could weary her love or tire her constancy. No shameful ingratitude provoked from her lips the harsh word, or woke in her heart the angry thought. If sorrow found them, her sympathy helped them to bear the grief; if joy was their portion, her smile gave new zest to their pleasure.

As the children grew up, they gathered to themselves new associates and formed new ties. One after another the sons took each a maiden to wife, bringing to the mother a new daughter

to love and cherish ; yet seeming to her but to have taken themselves away. One after another the daughters went to other homes, to live the lessons their mother had taught them by their husbands' hearthstones. By and by there was no own child left for the mother, widowed and lonely, to love. Grave, stately men, and fair, lovely women, clustered round her, showing her much tenderness and devotion ; and merry little grandchildren clung to and caressed her, renewing to her her days of youth ; but her own beloved children had grown away, and she was wont to think with a strange pleasure of the darlings who had gone from her years ago to the home of the blessed. Sometimes, just at dusk, a golden head would flash through the shadows, a soft foot would tiptoe to her side, and a pair of velvet eyes would gaze into hers. Then somebody would bustle in, drawing curtains and lighting lamps, and pitying mother, who had been alone so long, never knowing she had had in the twilight a beautiful vision of angels. All the evening there would be a new light on the fair, aged

face, a new happiness on the gentle brow ; and none would know how the actual world was brightened for the dweller in it by the sweetness of the ideal.

Oh ! when our little ones are taken from us to the better land, when our scalding tears drop as we robe the cold form for the grave, when we see the coffin shut, and hear the dull thud of the earth as it falls on the casket that hides our precious dust, it seems as if our sun had gone down for ever, and all comfort had fled from our lives. Peace, foolish heart ! God knows thy yearning and thy loss ; he knows the aching and the void, and all the weary reaching of the spirit through the dark to find out his purposes. As Cowper said, —

“ His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour ;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet shall be the flower.”

By and by, time shall sow the fresh sod over thy darling's grave with emerald verdure and star-eyed daisies, and into thy wounded spirit the Comforter shall drop the balm that hath

healing in its touch. It will be sweet, when sorrows and trials come to thy other children, to know that thou hast one far out of sorrow's way, far out of harm's way, far from strife, and sickness, and danger, even where God hath wiped all tears from every eye. And as age creeps over thee, and the twilight of second childhood throws round thee its mystic veil, thou shalt have precious hours with the little one that the Father hath kept for thee ; a child, with the beautiful memories and winning ways of babyhood, for all thy life.

Dr. Todd has spoken feelingly of the closeness of the bond between a father and daughter. Equally strong and sacred is that which unites mother and son. The mother loves to lean on the arm of her boy, and the boy, if he have a manly heart in his bosom, is proud to yield the support of his buoyant strength to the parent who spent hers so lavishly for him. And what a new grace is conferred on the *gentleman*—brave title, but sadly abused, and usurped by those who have no claim to it, wearing no gentleness upon their lives nor honor in

their breasts — when we see him waiting with deference and fond care on his mother!

There used to sit before me in church an aged lady, the mother of many children. It was beautiful to see how they gave her the most comfortable seat, adjusted the hassock for her feet, found her the place in the hymn-book, and helped her carefully down the church steps, at the close of the service. She was troubled with a cough, to alleviate which she usually carried with her a box of lozenges. One winter's morning, her cough came on in church, annoying her very much. One of her sons, seeing that she had forgotten the remedy that soothed her discomfort, quietly left the church, went home, and procured them. When he came back and slipped the little box into his mother's hand, I entered that man among my list of knights. I thought to myself, —

“ Nature puts forth her gentleman,
And monarchs must give place.”

But a sober, second thought convinced me that I mistook. Nature, where she has had full

scope, produces not gentlemen, but monsters, like the King of Dahomey, or the Feejee Islanders. It is sovereign grace that produces the peaceful, loving, self-denying spirit, thoughtful for others; which makes men noble, and women kind, and life worth the living.

The Turks have a saying like this: "Wives die, we can replace them; children die, others may be born unto us; but who shall give us back our mother?" If thus the infidel prizes his mother, shall not we? As the frost whitens her hair, as the breath of summer departs and she feels the chill blasts of winter, shall we not wrap her the closer in our arms of love, and hold her the nearer and dearer? Is she petulant sometimes? Son, daughter, be not impatient with her who was so patient with you. One cross, hasty word to a mother,—not seas of repentance shall wash it from your recollection. Give her reverential love, and teach your children that she is a precious treasure, to be tenderly cared for and prized.

Our Lord, on the cross, with a world's sins wringing the cry, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani,"

from his pale lips, bent down a look of pity on his mother, weeping beneath his feet. How beautiful his charge to John, “ Son, behold thy mother ! ”



II.

WHOM NOT HAVING SEEN, WE LOVE.

IT is easy to love when eye meets eye,
And the glance reveals the heart;
When the flush on the cheek can the soul
bespeak,

And the lips in gladness part.
There's a thrill of bliss in a loving kiss,
And a spell in a kindly tone,
And the spirit hath chains of tenderness
To fetter and bind its own.

But a holier spell and a deeper joy
From a purer fountain flow,
When the soul sends higher its incense fire,
And rests no more below;
When the heart goes up to the gate of heaven,
And bows before the throne,
And, striking its harp for sins forgiven,
Calls the Saviour all its own.

Though we gaze not now on the lovely brow
That felt for us the thorn,
Though afar from home we pilgrims roam,
And our feet with toil are worn;
Though we never have pressed that pierced hand,
It is stretched our lives above,
And we own His care in grateful prayer,
Whom, having not seen, we love.


We have felt him near for many a year,
When at eve we bent the knee;
That mercy-breath, that glorious faith,
Dear Saviour, came from thee.
In the weary hour when Satan's power
To tempt has tried our soul,
Oh, the healing balm of the heavenly calm,
With which he made us whole!

When we stood beside the dying bed,
And watched the loved one go,
In the darkening hour we felt his power,
As it hushed the waves of woe;
And over and through the grief we knew
A stronger heart than ours,
And arms of love that stretched from above
To comfort the weary hours.

And still, as we climb the hills of Time,
And the lamps of earth grow dim,
We are hastening on, from faith to sight,
We are pressing near to him;
And away from idols of earthly mold,
Enraptured we gaze above,
And long to be where his arms enfold,
Whom, having not seen, we love.

III.

TO-DAY.

 SINGLE sparkling drop
Of love divine
O'erflows my mortal cup;
To-day is mine!

Mine all its fleeting hours,
Its golden light;
Mine, with my highest powers,
Its scroll to write.

Mine, ere its moments fly,
To toil and pray;
To lift mine eyes on high,
This brief to-day!

Soon in the purple west
Its beams shall cease;
Oh, happy in my breast
To write it — Peace.

IV.

SHE LOVED MUCH.

WHAT a beautiful tribute to fall from the lips of the Master upon a sinful child of earth! What a sweet reflection from the mirror of his ever-loving, ever-pitying heart!

Jesus had been journeying. Weary with the heat and dust of the way, he had turned aside to rest in the house of a Pharisee. Unmindful of the usages of Eastern hospitality, his entertainer gave him no water to wash his feet, no perfumed oil to anoint his head, saluted him with no kiss. But while he tarried in the house of the churl, there stole timidly in, with tearful eyes and downcast look, a woman of Judæa. Bearing her alabaster box of very precious ointment, she knelt at his feet, and, as she poured it over them, mingled with her tears, imprinted on

them many a kiss. And then she wiped them with the hair of her head, the long rich tresses that had been her pride in the days of youthful innocence.

Jesus smiled upon her ; but the Pharisee who had bidden him was shocked that his guest should permit this close contact with one whom years of sin had made an outcast from her fellow-beings. The eye which penetrates all disguises saw his scornful thoughts, and the heart which yearned in pity over the erring and repentant prompted the Saviour's words, " Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much ; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."

Desponding, sin-stained soul, be this thy sur-est encouragement. Come to Jesus! Come now! His arms are open. There is room in his infinite heart. Try to return in some small measure his wonderful love, that of you too it may be said, " She loved much."

V.

TAKE HOLD OF MY HAND.

TAKE hold of my hand!" cries the little one when she reaches a slippery place, or when something frightens her. With little fingers tightly clasped around the parent's hand, she steps cheerfully along, clinging the closer when the path is crowded or the way steep, and happy in the beautiful strength of childish faith.

"Take hold of my hand!" says the young convert, trembling in the ardor of his first love. Full well he knows that if he rely on strength of his own he will stumble and fall, but if the Master reach forth his hand he may walk with unwearied foot over the crested wave. No waters of strife, no winds of temptation, shall peril him, if he can but keep close to the Saviour.

“Take hold of my hand!” falters the mother, feeling all too weak for the responsibilities that throng in her path. Where shall she obtain strength to go bravely on in her mission; where shall she find wisdom to fulfill its many duties, if she have not the constant sustaining presence of Him who bent from the cross with a word of comfort to his mother, standing desolate and heart-broken at its foot?

“Take hold of my hand!” whispers the aged one, tottering on through the shadows and snows of many years. As the lights of earth pale in the distance, and the dim eye strains forward to discern through the gloom the first glimmer of the heavenly home, the weary pilgrim cries out, even as the child to its parent, for the touch of the Saviour’s hand.

“E’en down to old age all my people shall prove
My faithful, eternal, unchangeable love,
And when hoary hairs shall their temples adorn,
Like lambs they shall still on my bosom be borne.”

O Jesus! Friend and Elder Brother, when the night cometh, when the feet are weary, when the eyes are dim, “Take hold of my hand!”

VI.

MY FATHER'S HOUSE.

SEEK a home beyond the skies, where all
is fair and bright,
Where not a single cloud of woe sweeps
o'er the hills of light,
Where songs of joy for ever swell, and holy an-
thems rise,
And God's own hand hath wiped away each
tear from sorrow's eyes.

My way below may often be all shadowy and
drear,
For I am but a wanderer, a weary pilgrim
here.
My Father bids me journey on, though storms
and tempests come,
And never lay my sandals off, until I reach my
home.

I would not change my dusty robes, my pilgrim's staff and scrip,
For all the cups of earthly bliss that worldlings love to sip :
Far, far beyond their poisoned founts, life's flowing waters lie,
And I shall quench my thirst in them, when I am called on high.

Though trials meet me in the path, and loved ones leave my side,
And bitter grief the tender chords of love and faith divide,
Though, watching by the couch of pain, my heart grows sick and sad,
I know that in my Father's house I'll be forever glad.

Still faithful to the work of love that to my hand is given,
Each step on earth is luminous with sunshine born of heaven.
Thrice welcome pain and weariness, thrice welcome gloom and night,
If ye but bear me quickly on to that fair land of light !

VII.

ALL NIGHT IN PRAYER.

ALL night in prayer! The stars came out in the sky, twinkling like silver lamps in the vault of blue, the clouds folded their fleecy curtains round the earth, the winds moaned and sighed, and the damp dews distilled on the mountains, while the long hours went on, hour after hour, till midnight dusk gave place to dawn, and the gray tints in the east faded away or were merged in the radiance of sunrise. Still knelt the Man of sorrows, pouring forth on the quiet night the voice of supplication to his Father. Weary and worn as he was when the day with its multiplied labors of love was over, at night, when others slept, he went alone to the mountain-top to pray.

We know not, and we never shall know, all that we owe to those nights of prayer. The

world's Redeemer there made intercession for all coming generations. What vast trains of the children of men, in the various stages of existence, from smiling infancy to helpless age, must have swept in review before the Saviour's eye. And as the shepherd knows each little lamb in all the flock, so our Shepherd, in those nights of weariness and pain, knew and recognized the thousands unborn, for whom he came to suffer. For his chosen ones he sent upward the voice of intense, earnest prayer, asking mercy alike for the sleeping world at his feet, and the unborn world that he saw with divine vision.

Think of it, careless one! As you lay your head upon a prayerless pillow, remember the Saviour's nights of agonizing prayer. As you walk forth into the busy scenes of life, having sought no protection from an unseen Arm, O foolish heart, and blind! pause and let memory go back to him, who, in everlasting love, did not forget you. The thought may yet prompt you to "look unto Jesus," who will open the

door of heaven to your immortal soul, if you will but knock.

Think of it, sleepless one, tossing so languidly on a restless pillow ! If conscience will not let you sleep, pray ! If care presses on you so heavily that your slumbers are light and unrestful, pray ! If fever trails her poison-dropping robes past you, and with hot breath withers the rose upon your cheek, pray, as Jesus often prayed, when faint and worn and sick.

Christian, let the thought fall on you, as the word "Peace" fell on the angry waters of Genesaret. Soldier of Jesus, battling against numerous foes for an invisible crown, let it stimulate your zeal, and inspire you with strength, till you listen to the glad beat of the reveille, in the sunny morning when you first tread your everlasting home. Christian teacher, remember the great Teacher, in his toils and discouragements and prayers, on the green mountain slopes of Judæa, in the crowded streets of Jerusalem, in the rocking fishers' boats on breezy Galilee. Dying Christian, think of it on the dark billow and in the lonesome valley.

VIII.

MORNING.

NOON is beautiful, with her crown of woven sunbeams, and her robes of resplendent light. Night is sublime, with her myriads of shining stars, and her quiver of silvery brightness. But Morning smiles on the awakening earth like the incarnation of tenderness and love. Her eyes look upon the flowers, her soft touch stirs the folded leaves, and their treasures of balmy fragrance float away on the light wings of air. She gazes at her own beauty in the crystalline dewdrops, and joyously sings a tune to the low symphonies of brook and waterfall. Even in winter, when the hush that rests upon Nature seems like a spell impressed by the finger of God, Morning comes gently from the cham-

bers of the east, fairest of the guardians who preside over the day.

Life awakens anew with each morning. Every young day is in its earliest hours a resurrection. At the faintest beam of light that pierces the enveloping shadows, multitudes of sleeping things start from the chains that bound them, and begin their appointed work. Children spring from the quiet couch, where they have slept the perfect sleep of health and youth, and are off to sport like the butterflies, or to work like the bees in the flowery fields. The sick one smiles because the night is over. Many a spirit that has battled the live-long night with the King of Terrors, at the coming of dawn

“ Walks through glory’s morning gate,
And wakes in Paradise.”

The sons and daughters of toil go forth again to the conflicts of labor and enterprise. The guilt-burdened soul, bowed with the consciousness of crime, is glad for the morning, because it is easier to meet the eye of man in the sunlight than the eye of God in the darkness.


Morning is holy from its associations with

divine remembrances in the Book of God. In its freshness and bloom, patriarchs and prophets communed with the Father. The smoke of the sacrifice went up from the altar of the temple for thousands of years, at the coming in of day. Christ and his apostles began their labor of love ere the dew had dried from the cups of the lilies. The weeping women went very early in the morning to the sepulcher of him they loved, and Mary heard his sweet voice calling her name in the stillness of the garden at the first blush of sunrise.

Mornings of earth ! how beautiful ye are ! So beautiful that methinks we shall keep with us a thought of your sweetness and delight, even amid the exceeding loveliness of the morning that shall dawn upon us in the New Jerusalem above.

IX.

SHOW ME THYSELF.

HEN the waves of trouble roll
O'er the weary, burdened soul,
Saviour, I shall strengthened be,
If thou show thyself to me!

When the sun of joy is bright,
And I revel in its light,
Lest earth's bliss too dazzling be,
Manifest thyself to me!

When I wander from the way,
In the paths of danger stray,
Bending down in mercy free,
Saviour, show thyself to me!


Spirit, Comforter divine!
Be my heart thy blessed shrine!
From the tempter's snares set free,
Come and show thyself to me!

While earth's suns and shadows meet,
Mingling round my pilgrim feet,
Till in heaven I rest with thee,
Saviour, show thyself to me!



X.

I DWELL WITH MINE OWN.

HAT shall I give thee?" the prophet
said,
As before him she bowed her stately
head,

And the golden light of the noontide sun
Encircled them both with its shining zone.

"Riches or wealth for thy household band?
Honors or gifts at the king's right hand?
Tell me, I pray thee, if aught there be
That my grateful heart can obtain for thee."

Softly she spoke; yet her sweet voice low
Had a tone of freedom from pain and woe;
It thrilled through the heart of the prophet
lone:

"Nothing I crave, — I dwell with mine own."

I dwell with mine own! What visions come,
Of kindred beloved, of a happy home!
Of meetings in peace 'neath the household vine,
Of partings and prayers at the sun's decline!

O favored of Heaven, to us may be
Granted the boon that so blessed thee!
That when sunshine lights us, or tempests moan,
We may smile or suffer "among our own."



XI.

LOVE NOT THE WORLD.

EARTH has much that is surpassingly beautiful, to win the heart and chain the affections. How bright the bloom of the youthful spring, when the joy of a new life is thrilling in the veins of flower and tree, and the glory of a softer sunlight is flashing and darting into the deep nooks of the forest, and sparkling on the bosom of the wave! How majestic the march of the summer, in her robes of gold, broidered with roses red and white, and fringed with deepest green! How calm and peaceful the early autumn months, ere the hectic of the dying summer has faded into the pallor of decay! How sublime the sweeping chorus of the storms, and the silent fall of the crystals, when winter scatters his snow like wool! Truly, the Creator hath made all things

beautiful in their season ; and the loveliness of this home makes us hold our breath in wonder as we think of the next.

Home hath many sweet ties that bind us earthward. Every year that goes over our heads makes dearer, by a thousand acts and words, the gray-haired father, the tender mother, the gentle wife, the loving husband, the dutiful child. Ambition, pleasure, love, science, travel, every new achievement, every new delight, every new acquirement, are so many ties, that, unsanctified, may bind us here and help us to forget the sweet hereafter.

“Love not the world!” says the apostle. Its fashions pass away, its glory fades, its fine gold dims, its treasures are eaten of the moth, its friendships often drop apart in rough winds of misfortune, like daisy chains, that children twine, and leave to wither when they tire of them. O Love, thou bird of Paradise, fold thy wings never, till thou reach the everlasting home !

XII.

ROCKING THE CRADLE.

IT is pleasant to sit in the twilight,
And watch the stars as they tread
With their feet so swift and silent
On the luminous floor o'erhead;
But, oh, it is pleasanter far, I ween,
To sit and rock the cradle at e'en,
While the lullaby floats with its gentle rhyme,
And the mother's heart to the tune keeps time.

It is pleasant to float on the river,
When the moonbeams faintly glow,
And the words of a friend or a lover
Blend with the oar-plash low;
But happier far is the quiet hour,
When a mother's love hath the fullest power,
And, by all save God and angels unseen,
She rocks her darling's cradle at e'en.

XIII.

I AM WITH THEE ALWAYS.

IN the storm, in the calm, in the sun and the
gloom,

This promise of thine is our lamp to illumine.

Oh, what can we fear when this sweet word
is given

To light us along till we meet thee in heaven !

Oh ! leave us not, Lord, when hope's torch flashes
high,

When pleasure's cup sparkles, and friends cluster
nigh,

For when rapture and bliss shed their beams on
our way,

Then most we frail mortals will wander and stray.

Oh, leave us not, Saviour, when clouds gather
thick,

When we're weary or sorrowing, lonely or sick !

When the dark mists of earth hide the hopes that
we cherish,
And despairing we whisper, "Save, Lord, or we
perish!"

Be with us, Redeemer, be with us at home;
Thy presence, thy blessing, its pleasures illumine.
At morning, at nightfall, how glorious to be
Sustained and assisted and guarded by thee!

These footsteps are feeble; these pathways are
steep;
And the night winds of sorrow oft over us sweep;
But, guarded by thee, let our journeyings tend
Still upward and onward, Redeemer and Friend!

XIV.

"I KNOW THY WORKS."

IN all our changeful life, there is no hiding-place where our Saviour can not find us. Alike in the clear sunshine or the darkling storm, his eye is over his people, and his infinite heart holds them, every one. When the hill is steep, and briers and thorns grow on its sharp ascent, he is watching the weary flock, ready to help and to pity as they strain up the mountain-side. When the path leads through velvet lawns and beside peaceful waters, the Shepherd gazes tenderly, yet fearfully, upon them, for these are the "Enchanted Grounds" where there is danger that the pilgrim fall into a fatal sleep.

Jesus knows the works of his people. He knows their ways, whether they keep just on

the skirts of the world, or whether they walk in the narrow way that leadeth to himself. He knows when they extend a helping hand to the pale children of sorrow, and when they shut their ear to the cry of the desolate. Their motives are all open to him. Men judge by results; Christ sees the secret spring.

Let the precious thought that we work under our Master's eye stimulate us to do and dare for him. When the spirit faints, let it reach forth in its feebleness to Jesus, the Strong. In the hour of prayer let it take courage, for he with whom it wrestles will hear and sustain. Upborne by everlasting arms, and looking to the Author and Finisher of our faith, let us press on to the joy that is set before us.

"I know thy works!" should be a warning to the careless soul. While ye sleep, while ye toil, while ye trifle, time drifts you on to the presence of the eternal God. The same kind Saviour who now extends his offers of mercy will by and by put on the form of the inexorable Judge. He who has known you all your

life will need no words to prove your guilt at the final hour.

Repent therefore, and believe, that you may at last enter into the presence of the Master with exceeding joy.



XV.

FOR EVER WITH THE LORD.

FOR ever with thee, Brother, Friend!
For ever close to thee,
Through all the swiftly gliding years
Of bright eternity!

No clouds to veil thee from our sight,
No mists to wrap the hills of light,
No cares to come between;
But by thy side, and purified,
In that fair world unseen!

For ever with thee, Saviour, Friend,
No longer far away,
To see thee, love thee without end,
In yonder land of day!
Temptations now away must flee,
And trials change to ecstasy,
And grief be lost in love,
And strifes and fears and burning tears
Be known no more above.

For ever with thee, Christ our Hope,
The anchor of our soul!
Though here with winds and storms we cope,
And billows wildly roll,
Yet, breathing o'er the angry seas,
We hear thy word commanding "Peace,"
And own thy watchful care;
What then shall be eternity,
For ever with thee there!

For ever with thee! Nevermore
To pain thy loving heart!
To wander weary on earth's shore,
From thee, our Lord, apart!
No more to wound thy guiding hand,
No more to break thy kind command,
Nor slumber in the fray;
But near thy side, and glorified,
And freed from sin for aye.

For ever! 'Tis a pleasant thought,
When time and death are o'er,
We'll meet our parted friends again,
And break Love's chain no more.
Oh, memory hath her pictures old,

Rarer than gems or woven gold,
Of lost, and true, and fair,
Whom we shall meet in union sweet,
When we are summoned there.

But, oh! for ever with the LORD,
While fleeting ages roll,
And music wakes from every chord
Of this immortal soul!
'Tis this makes heaven so wondrous bright!
'Tis this illumines earth's darkling night,
For this we toil and pray;
For this we hope and watch and wait
Till shadows flee away.

XVI.

LITTLE CARES.

IN her beautiful little tract, entitled "Earthly Care a Heavenly Discipline," Mrs. Stowe remarks that "Many Christians who can bow with meek submission to the will of God when a beloved child is taken away, are quite overcome by such trifles as the petulance of a servant or the breaking of a dish."

No one who has ever closely examined his own heart can fail to know that the little things, the petty cares and annoyances which checker the passing days, are far more trying to the patience and meekness of the spirit than the great things. The heaped-up treasures of years may fade before the moth, and the plans of ambition lie broken at our feet; yet these may be borne with calm brow and serene speech. The missing paper in the morning, the coffee

muddy, the biscuit burnt, the carelessness of a servant, may create a nervous impatience which shall mar the comfort of a whole day.

Yet wherefore? One reason is perhaps that we gird ourselves to grapple with great troubles, summoning all our moral strength to meet the crisis, while we sit down and let the little troubles conquer us. But the main reason is, that we forget to ask strength from heaven to bear the little things. We know that God's grace is freely promised; but we act as if we thought it would be given grudgingly, and we go to the throne asking only for generalities. We should ask special strength for special needs. He who paints the lily, and guides the wing of the bird, will not forget us in our hours of care. Why should the faith which can trust for all eternity be afraid to take hold on Jesus for the little necessities of time?

Let us not be sad Christians, impatient Christians, repulsive Christians. "The joy of the Lord is your strength." When the daily care makes the lip quiver and the brow contract, let

us but get nearer to the Beloved. Thinking of his heavy cross, let us bear ours, so light in comparison, with patient smiles, if not with thankful songs.



XVII.

RIGHT SHALL CONQUER.

NO motto on earth is a better one for heroes. It was a firm belief in the truth and the power of the right that made Luther utter his noble reply when urged not to go to Worms : “Though there were as many devils in Worms as there are tiles on the housetops, I would go !” It was this which strengthened the martyrs of many climes and ages, when tried by fire and flood. It is this which kept and keeps many a missionary worker, in a barren and unfruitful field. It cheered Judson at Ava and Rangoon ; it helped Sarah Boardman as she wiped the death-damps from her husband’s brow in the lonely Karen country. It shines like a star in many a low-roofed cabin in the far West. where the home

missionary struggles through manifold discouragements to do his Master's work.

Many a life that passes away in obscurity is sublime with this grand faith. The mother, worn out with cares, and aching for lack of sleep, remembers it, as she presses her burning head against the cool pillow at night. The father, working hard, and earning his bread by the sweat of his brow, the scholar toiling early and late to wrest some treasure of learning from oblivion and hand it down to the future, the editor, the physician, the seamstress, and the host of workers who must be content to work unappreciated, are all the better for a little green place in their hearts, where is written, though their lips never utter it, "The right shall conquer!"

There are lives like comets; brilliant for a season, and sweeping through the sky with a whirl of splendor and a trail of silver radiance after them. There are lives like shooting stars; one moment of dazzling glory,—a fall, and unbroken gloom. There are some that shine steadily, steadily, over wild conflict of winds

and tossing of foamy waves, like the gleam of the light-house lamp in the midnight and the storm. There are others like the little rush-light by the cottage hearth, throwing faint radiance out over but a little space, but helping the mother to knit the stocking as she rocks the cradle with her foot, and the boy to learn his lessons for the coming day.

Each of these lives, and all of them, shall be better and braver and nobler for the thought of the conquering right. Each of them, and all, shall be God's witnesses for the right. Friend, will you not willingly give your testimony for God, and battle with all your strength to scatter light over a world's gloom?

XVIII.

OUR BEST FRIEND.

THOU heavenly Friend! thou heavenly
Friend!

How sweet when days are dark,
When storms arise, to fly to thee,
Our shelter and our ark!

How sweet to hear thy gentle voice
Above the tempest's rage;
How sweet to clasp thy guiding hand
Through all our pilgrimage!

Thou heavenly Friend! thou heavenly Friend!
The friends we trust below
May leave us in the bitter hour
Of poverty and woe;
Let but suspicion's tainted breath,
Or slander's poisoned dart,
Assail us, and their mocking scorn
Falls leaden on our heart.

Thou heavenly Friend! thou heavenly Friend!

It is not so with thee;

Thy little ones, dear Lord, are thine

To all eternity.

Firm as the everlasting hills,

And sweeter, day by day,

Thy love and faithfulness increase,

Thy grace hath fuller sway!

Thou heavenly Friend! thou heavenly Friend!

Thy goodness who can tell?

We thank thee for this pleasant earth,

This Beulah, where we dwell;

We thank thee for the tented skies,

For forests green and wide,

For all the paths by which we climb,

Dear Saviour, to thy side.

Thou heavenly Friend! thou heavenly Friend!

This earthly home is fair,

And all our lives are jewel-decked

With tokens of thy care.

And, blessed be thy holy name,

We have a home on high;

And death is but the outer gate

To that bright upper sky!

Thou heavenly Friend! thou heavenly Friend!

We thank thee most of all
For thy daily life when here below,
For Pilate's judgment hall;
For weary bearing of thy cross,
For mournful Calvary;
And for thy rising from the dead,
As raised we hope to be.

Thou heavenly Friend! thou heavenly Friend!

What wilt thou have us do?
On let us labor in thy name,
Our courage still renew;
Thrice blessed if in that great day
When thou shalt count each gem,
One little star that we have won
Shine on thy diadem.

XIX.

"NO MATTER WHEN, BUT HOW."

THESE were the sweet words of an aged saint. Often she repeated them in the hearing of her children and friends, until they became indelibly impressed on their memories. When others spoke of dreading death, she would smile calmly, and say, "No matter when, but how!" If only we are found leaning on the arm of the Beloved, it matters little whether death takes us in the sunny hour of youth, or in the evening of declining age. If the heart is right with God, what does it matter whether the spirit departs from earth at the swift sharp call of the Minié bullet or the flashing of the saber on the battlefield, or suddenly ceases its beating in the busy street, or glides softly away, pulse by pulse, in the sweet seclusion of home? It is but the dif-

ference of a few days or years, merged in the long glory of the hereafter. "Always ready!" should be the motto of immortals. Ready by night or by day, in the house of God or in the mart of business,—ready at any hour to hear the Master say, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Such helpless creatures too we are, "crushed before the moth!" The fang of a reptile tears open the quivering flesh, a drop of subtile poison enters the veins, and we die. Walking leisurely along the forest path, a loosened branch falls, and stretches us lifeless on the ground. Now it is an unseen pitfall, now a sliding wall, a misplaced switch on a railroad, or a flaw in the boiler of the vessel that we are journeying in. Just a step between the seen and the unseen! The veil is rent, and we are amazed to find how thin it is; so near are earth and heaven.

You have in your house, perhaps, what Mrs. Browning so beautifully calls "a sweet piece of the heaven that men strive for." How long it shall be yours, how long you shall hold

that baby, gazing with raptured tenderness on the sweet, rose-flushed cheek and lip,—the lovely eyes, beneath their fringe of long, sweeping lashes; how long its faintest wail, if you are a mother, shall be your most dearly loved music, you can not know. But so live that, if God recalls what he has given, you may be ready at any time to go where your treasure is.

In any event, it is a great comfort to leave everything with Jesus. As the moss clings to the rock, reaching out a hundred invisible hands and taking hold so tightly that neither sun nor storm has power to disturb or tear it thence; as the ivy clings to the oak, as the child to its mother, so let us cling to the Saviour. We can not tire him out. We can not get too near, nor stay too long. And let us fear nothing. "Little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Hand of man may not harm you, hand of angel shall not, till He wills it who is over all. So be brave. No matter when you die, but exceedingly great matter how.

XX.

IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

WHAT might have been, dear brother? What might have crowned the year, that lies entombed beneath many a sad regret, with the laurels of victory? What words of kindness were left unspoken? What good resolutions were crushed in the bud? What precious opportunities withered by the chill air of neglect? What homes uncheered that might have smiled in the light of love? Ah! in all the bitter laments that drift out with the tide, when the last wave of the year floats into the dim ocean of the past, no words are so fraught with sad meaning as these, "It might have been!"

As we turn the historic page, we are forced to utter them over and over. We see Genius wrecked upon the rocks of evil purpose. We

see love, mistaken and misdirected, prostituting its heaven-bestowed powers in the service of sin. We behold power welding the chains that bind thousands to lives of hopeless degradation, indolence blighting multitudes by her withering breath, unbelief flying to and fro, resolute and strong as Satan cleaving chaos on his way to work man's ruin. The world's past is a vast heap of ruins. Over its broken temples and crumbling arches the soft beams of mercy shine; and the choral song of the angels who heralded the coming Saviour sweeps yet with silvery cadence through its echoing halls; but it is for all a ruin inscribed with the record, "It might have been!"

The first soft light of a new year lies lovingly upon our earthly ways. Nevermore can we recall the hasty word, the unhallowed thought, the mistaken act. The last year is in its grave. And as we have, all of us, bent tearfully over the pale, cold brow of some beloved one, wishing that our tears could blot out all the remembrance of aught we ever said or did to wound the heart of the quiet sleeper, so over the last

year we breathe our murmurs of penitent sorrow. Let us "watch and pray," that the golden moments of the present may bear no dark record as they flit away.

When the long walk to the mission school must be taken alone, and the day is drear and dismal, when the wind is wild without, and the hearth-fire is warm and genial, then is the time to remember that Christ's soldiers are called upon to "endure hardness." When the voice of the sick little child, in the widow's upper room, grows faint and far away in the midst of the pleasant merriment of home, and the voices of those we love are nearest and dearest, then is the hour for self-denial. When the unjust reproach or the unkind repartee springs to the lip, then is the time for resolute silence. When the tempter would cheat the soul with the treacherous "to-morrow" that floats like a mirage before so many till it drives them to inaction and despair, then is the time to meet him with a noble, decided "Now."


"Of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these, 'It might have been.'"

Let us live so faithfully and earnestly that we may have no cause to utter them sorrowfully as our heads press the pillow, when this year has grown old.



XXI.

ALONE IN THE DARK.

TAY by me to-night, dear mamma!" said a child;

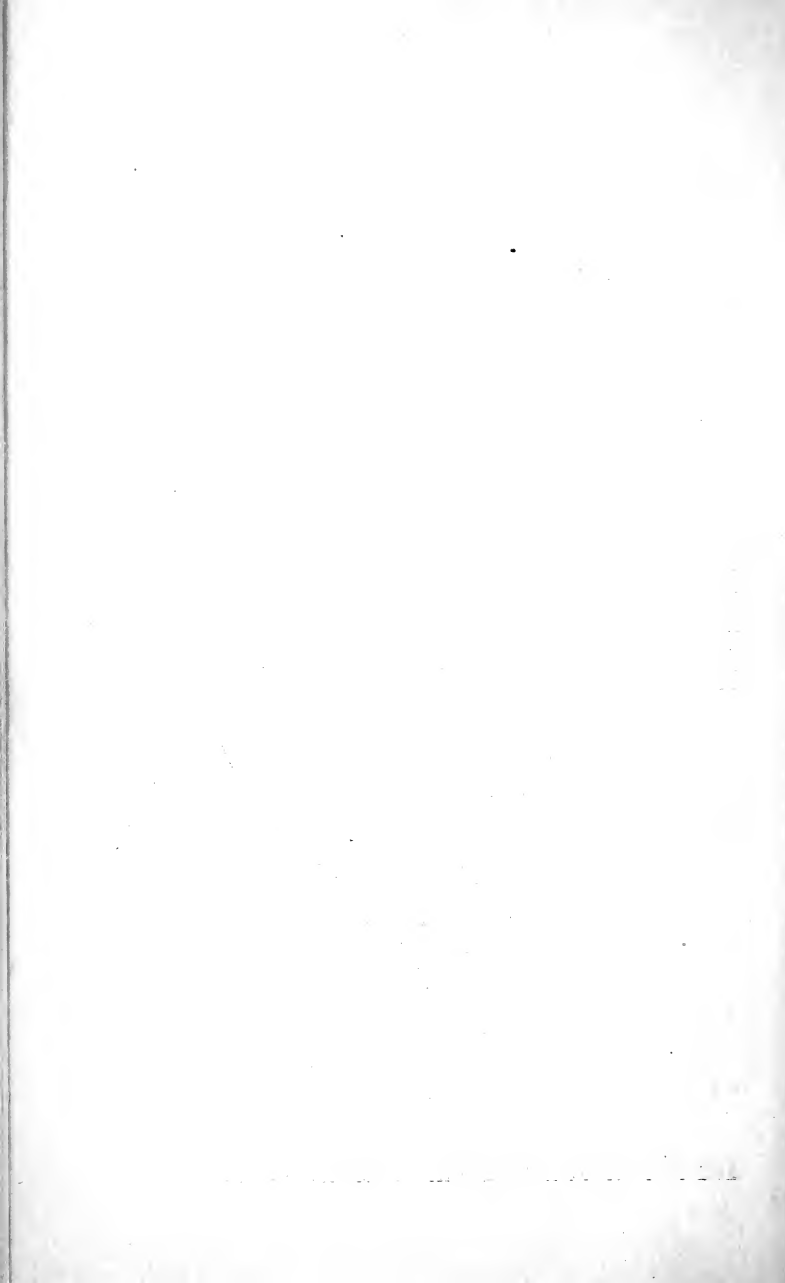
"The rain rattles down, and the wind is so wild;

I shut up my eyes, and I cover my head,
And draw myself up in a heap in the bed;
And I think about robbers, and shiver with fear:
Do stay by me, mother! It's so dark up here!"

"I can not, my darling; and why should I stay?
You are never afraid to come hither by day;
You study and play in this same little room,
And never have left it with fear or with gloom;
Why, then, when you're wrapped up so cozy and
warm,
Do you think about things that can do you no
harm?"

ALONE IN THE DARK.





“Oh, mother, it’s light in the daytime, you know,
And the sunshine then puts all the room in a glow;
And up from the hall comes a murmur of sound,
And Jennie and Kittie are running around;
Though your voice, dear mother, I don’t always
 hear,
It’s so light and so cheerful, I know you are there.”

“My dear little boy, I’m afraid you forget
That God is near by, watching over you, pet.
Nor darkness nor daylight is safe without One
Who sees us and guards us till life’s race is run.
In the loneliest night he is close by your side;
If you love him and trust him, ‘the Lord will
 provide.’

“You never need fear, but, when feeble or faint,
Then call on the Lord; he will hear your com-
 plaint.

There’s no one to hurt you when God is so nigh;
His angels to keep you descend from the sky.”

The child put his soft little hand in her own,
And kissed the dear face that so lovingly shone;
“You may put out the light, mother dear, when
 you please;
If I feel afraid now, I will think that God sees.”

XXII.

THREE YEARS OLD.

I HAVE a little daughter,
A sweet and precious child,
And the light of three short summers
Hath on her pathway smiled.

Her face is round and rosy,
For health hath nestled there,
And her brow is smooth and happy,
Beneath her nut-brown hair.

Ere day hath dawned she wakes me
With kisses warm and sweet;
And soon the halls are ringing
To the patter of her feet.
No shade of care or sorrow
Hath wrapped her in its fold,
And I envy, looking on her,
The light of three years old!

Her heart is brimming over
 With love for all things fair;
The birds, and bees, and flowers,
 In her affections share.
Her heart is like a fountain
 Whence fragrant waters pour,
And not a drop of bitter
 Hath dimmed the bubbles o'er.

I watch her in the twilight,
 When stars come out on high,
And dart their silver brightness
 From yonder arching sky.
She has an angel mother,
 Above that crystal dome,
Who smiles perhaps upon her,
 From out the heavenly home.

She hath little griefs and sorrows;
 The tiniest have their share,
And we early learn life's lesson,
 To suffer and to bear.
But a little word of comfort
 Will chase the grief away,
And send her bright and smiling
 To her careless, gleeful play.

I can not tell, my darling,
What life doth hold for thee, —
What chords of joy or sorrow
Shall murmur thrillingly ;
For hearts that love most fondly
Oft bleed o'er blight and woe,
And the jewel long is polished
That sheds the rarest glow.

May a Father's heart infold thee,
As years shall o'er thee fleet,
And mingle thorn and flower
Beneath thine onward feet !
Yet, oh, that thou could'st linger,
When many a year is told,
As happy and as free, love,
As now at three years old !

XXIII.

UNSPOTTED FROM THE WORLD.

THE question of amusements is a question of conscience with many Christians. Just how far one may venture into the region frequented by the votaries of fashion, just how definite and clear shall be the line that separates the church from the world, is, to many a true disciple of Jesus, who would not willingly bring reproach upon the Master's name, a theme of absorbing interest. Where lies the golden mean between a sinful latitude and an equally sinful bigotry? Shall we best serve our Saviour's cause in this world by letting down the bars that divide his people from his foes, until they are so low that the thoughtless shall step over by mistake; or by keeping fast to the old landmark that he himself set up when he said, "Strait is the gate, and narrow

is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it"? Shall we keep our Sabbaths with reverence and solemnity, as days set apart for the worship of a holy God, or shall they be to us glad days indeed, but only so in that lower sense which would dedicate them to frolic and feasting, to merriment and song? Shall we cling to the old-fashioned Christianity of our forefathers and of the Bible, or shall we be swept on, like waifs, in the flood of false doctrine and mistaken amusement that pours through the life and literature of the century?

Years ago, in my childhood, I attended a school on the banks of the Passaic. Beautiful river, winding like a silver band through the green meadows and dimpling hills and vales of Jersey, how many a sweet, never-to-be-forgotten association is recalled by thy name! There are broader and statelier streams on the great continent, there are names that thrill to a thousand brave historic memories, for every one of thine; but there are none brighter, busier, bolder, in all the arterial network, than the little Passaic, whether flashing between marshy

banks in the morning sun, or turning the throbbing wheels of the mill, or foaming with voice of muffled thunder and beams of rainbow light over the rocks at the Paterson Falls.

In that little low-roofed school-house I learned some of the most valuable lessons of my life,—not the least among them, the importance of setting a consistent Christian example before even the youngest child. It would be wrong to utter words of eulogy, however deserved, upon those dear teachers who still tarry upon the earth ; but of her who has passed within the veil I may truly say, speaking for many beside myself, she was, in our eyes, a “living epistle,” wherein we saw the “beauty of holiness.” Her life was “unspotted from the world ;” and those words ever recall to my mind a vision of a calm, pale face, soft, thoughtful, brooding eyes, and smooth hair falling over an unruffled brow. The tones of her voice, the silvery echo of her laugh, come back to me, after many years, like a sweet strain of music, and the hours I spent beside her desk are among the golden ones of

memory, to be treasured when my eye grows dim and my hair gray.

To her I went once with a childish “case of conscience.” What it was, I have forgotten now; probably something small in itself, yet to my youthful mind important; but, though the occasion has slipped from me, not so her reply. It simply sent me to the test by which her own acts were tried, — to the one unerring test by which the Christian should regulate his life. To-day I have the tiny slip of paper — somewhat yellow now, the graceful characters traced upon it faded and brown — which I found in the little drawer of my table when the recess was over; these words merely, for all answer, —

“Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”

I think that to this test, these infallible utterances of Scripture, we ought to bring the question of amusements, and conscientiously abide by the decision to which it leads us. Whatever we can engage in heartily, happily, hopefully, as in the presence and to the glory of God, can not be wrong. Whatever we enter

upon with conscience uttering a mental protest in our bosoms, and filling us with an uneasy sense of "stolen waters," and "bread eaten in secret," pleasant now, but sure to be bitter by and by, can not be right. Whatever carries upon it, even in the eyes of a lenient world, the sign-manual of Satan, can not by any amount of explanation or argument be converted into a profitable recreation for a Christian.

Not long since, I watched by the dying bed of an aged lady. The snows of many winters were on her white hair, but until stricken down in her last illness she had known little trouble, and far less pain and care than fall to the lot of most people. Her eyes had not lost their sight, nor her frame its vigor. Through the longer portion of her sickness, which was protracted, her mental powers were clouded, and toward the last she was totally unconscious. Through the long, still hours of her latest night on earth I sat by her, while the laboring breath grew fainter, fainter, and fainter still, then ceased altogether, and over the face

passed the quick, subtile change, which told that the soul had fled. Then others came to array the body for its last resting-place, and kind hands lingered lovingly about the aged form as they dressed it for the grave. "Ah!" said one, as she lifted the hands that lay cold and lifeless, and crossed them on the breast, "how often have I seen these hands shuffling and dealing cards at whist! Poor old lady! Cards were her passion!"

Now, there are many people who see no harm in a social game of cards. Many members of churches play themselves, and encourage their children so to do, regarding them as a pleasant way of passing an evening, incomparably superior to gossip. Others take the ground that none who have been used to playing cards in their homes in childhood will in after years indulge in the soul-destroying pursuits of the gambler, or rush to the excitement of games of chance as a relief from the monotony of life. Far be it from the writer to dictate to any, but, reader, would you like it that in some future day, when your hands, that

now are warm, shall be marble cold, a friend, standing by your side, should remark, "Ah! they will never shuffle the cards any more!"

Rather, when the majesty of death stamps itself on us, when the heart has grown weary of its work, and the red blood stands still in the veins, may it be remembered how our hands gave food to the hungry, clothing to the naked, comfort to the sad, soothing to the sick, and gentle ministries to the aged and the young.

There remain, when from the list of recreations those which may at best be considered doubtful are stricken out, many which are perfectly pure and of good report. Of these, those out-door pleasures which win to merriment and wholesome excitement, which flush the cheek with the rose of health and light the eye with the sparkle of enjoyment, must take precedence. Horseback-riding, skating, and croquet, are not merely sanitary in their influence, and therefore good; they bring us nearer to our mother Nature, and nearer too to Nature's God. Out in the fresh air and the sunshine, with all God's happy, healthy creatures, we can


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drink from the fountain of pleasure which he has made.

Never, dear brother, let us do what may prove a stumbling-block to any soul that is struggling into the way of life. Never let us go where we can not pray for God's blessing to follow; never take a step nearer the world, instead of a step nearer heaven; never, even in our hours of recreation, forget the "glory of God;" and never cease to pray that even here we may be "unspotted from the world." Shall we not by and by wear white raiment?

XXIV.

F R O S T - W O R K .

 LITTLE one sought me this morning,
Her blue eyes shining bright,
While over her cheek the dimples
Were playing in changeful light.

“Come up to my room,” she whispered;
“A curious thing is there!
A painter has worked through the night hours
In the cold and shivering air.

“He has made a beautiful castle
Far up on a mountain high;
And a forest of stately trees,
With boughs that reach to the sky.

“They are all on my window, mother,
The strange and beautiful things,
And the morning sun above them
A rainbow beauty flings!”

I went with the little prattler
The mystical work to see;
And glorious in the sunlight
Was the delicate tracery.

For all night long the artist
Had silently wrought away,
And only put by his pencil
At the coming in of day, —

Softly and stealthily toiling,
By the holy light of the stars,
And the light that streams like a glory
From the far-off crystal bars.

He had gone, as he came, in silence,
But his work was left behind,
Like the fairies who send their favors
By night to the good and kind.

How often the silent worker
In the busy mart of time
Weaves a life of angel beauty,
Then soars to another clime!

And when lip and brow have faded
In the dust and gloom of death,

Their memories come to the living,
Evangel of love and faith.

Oh! teach me, beautiful frost-work,
Another lesson in life,—
The web that is woven by night-time,
At morning with gems may be rife.



XXV.

THE CROSS.

T WERE sweet to stand on Olivet, where
stood the Lord of old,
And hear the tender Shepherd call his
wanderers to the fold.

But, oh, a purer joy is ours, though dimmed by
flowing tears,

When at the foot of Calvary we cast away our
fears!

Here may the little children come, as fearless
and as free

As when they bend to lisp their prayer beside
their mother's knee.

Here may the sinner, deeply stained, find peace
and be forgiven,

For Christ, the sinless Lamb, was slain for us to
open heaven.

Come, burdened heart, bowed down with grief,
and mourning o'er thy dead!

The Saviour hath his grace for thee; thy path
his feet did tread;
He ever heeds the mourner's prayer, and, weary
though thou be,
Thy burden will be felt no more, removed at
Calvary.

The waves of time go dashing on; the shifting
winds of life
Are wafting us unweariedly, through varying
scenes of strife,
To yonder bright, eternal shore,—we'll gain it
without loss,
If still with love and faith we turn to One
upon the cross.

How precious through the gathering years seems
mournful Calvary!
Not Hermon, with its glory, is half so sweet to
me;
Not Olivet, nor mountains lone, where Jesus
went to pray,
Can touch the heart like Golgotha, where
breathed his life away:
He gave his life a sacrifice, he died in agony;
O sinner, take it to thy heart, *he gave his
life for thee!*

XXVI.

COBWEBS FROM THE CEILING.

IT was a lady's parlor. There was a soft, rich carpet on the floor, and pictures smiled from the walls. Many articles of taste and beauty adorned the room. There were statuettes in marble and bronze, shells from distant sun-bright shores of India or the islands of the Pacific, wax-flowers that rivaled nature, and minerals from the heart of the earth. Books in elegant bindings lay on the tables. Nothing pained the eye by unsightliness or ostentation. It was a perfect gem of a parlor.

But high up in a corner of the ceiling, twisting into the intricate foliage pendent from the pure cornice, there hung a great, black, dusty cobweb. It had eluded the lady's vision and the housemaid's broom, till it had

grown into a drapery that overhung the beauty and profusion of the pleasant room like a polluted thing.

Its many companions were there for some good purpose. The useful and the beautiful linked their strong, fair hands together in smiling unity, save in that corner, where the rude fingers of neglect and disorder had been at work, weaving that solitary cobweb.

I have seen characters somewhat like this. They were fair as the summer morning, symmetrical and pleasant. Generous, kind, and thoughtful, earnest and useful, how sad that any lurking stain should deface them! Alas! away up in a corner, which the sunbeams seldom penetrated, there hung a dusty web of envy, like a gloomy spirit, or a shrouding robe of selfishness, invisible and unsuspected. How drearily the little cobweb defaced the temple that had else been pure and white!

A little cloud, like "a man's hand," is, on eastern skies, herald of the coming storm. A little lightning-flash shivers the oak that has flourished a hundred years. A little word has

sealed the fate of an empire. So a little cobweb in a character sometimes creeps and creeps till it darkens with its hateful shadow all that was lovely. Who would have thought that the Isabella, patron and founder of a new civilization, who sent Columbus on his mission over unknown seas, would have been also won by priestcraft to become patron and founder of the Spanish Inquisition? Who would have thought that the Elizabeth who rode so bravely along the lines of her soldiers when the Armada was expected, coming like a great bird of prey to seize the island, would afterward have been so cruel and so cowardly as to sign the death-warrant of poor Mary of Scots? Who would have known the Arnold who was carried from Saratoga's field covered with wounds and glory for the same Arnold whose name shall go down to all ages as a synonym of shame? Take care of the cobwebs!


Mother, brush away that little web of deceit which Satan is trying to weave over the mind of your child, which should be open as the day. Let not the cobwebs of greed, or

self-love, or suspicion, or vanity, gather in the dim corridors of your own soul.

I have seen cobwebs that were very beautiful. They hung from the leaves of the rosebud, and festooned the robes of spring. Dewdrops glistened in them, and sunbeams shimmered through their ethereal texture. Still they were cobwebs, akin to the things that hide in dark places and lurk in dim corners of shrines. Likened they may be to the frown that looks pretty on the dimpled face of a child, or piquant on the ivory brow of the young girl, but which grows into such a hard, repulsive look when age and wrinkles come. They are like the nameless additions and exaggerations which sometimes make a good story a little better, but which are all the while paving a way for falsehood to trail her garments over; cobwebs, hanging darkly from the ceiling or veiling a glowing June rose. Reader, brush them away.

XXVII.

THE NINE O'CLOCK BELLS.

IGHT after night they ring out on the air, clearly, boldly, telling that another day is almost gone, and summoning the weary to repose.

Hands that are weary now forsake the task, and aching heads seek the welcome pillow. Bright eyes are veiled by the long, fringing lashes, and the honey-dew of slumber falls lightly over the happy world of childhood. Alas, that many a tired brain must labor by the light of the midnight taper, and many a toiler work long after the echo of the nine o'clock bell has died away in silence! Alas for the little ones, too early matured, whose shouts of laughter fill the streets, after night-fall, with the knell of childish innocence! for the golden-haired cherubs, who, robed in silk

and purple, are threading the mazes of the dance, and drinking fragrant poison from the cup of folly, long after the good-old hour of nine !

Nine ! Hour around which pleasant memories meet, memories of the proud, true-hearted past, when body and mind kept pace together, and the bright rose of health bloomed oftener on the smooth cheek of matron and maid than now ; when the lights were out in the farmer's kitchen, and the embers burned dimly on the cottage hearth ; when the sweet incense of prayer and praise went up from uncounted homes to our Father's ear, and beneath his kindly care parents and children went to sleep at nine. Happy indeed are the little ones, in these days of tinsel and glitter, whose merriment is hushed by the gentle angel of slumber before the evening bells begin their chimes.

Their strain floats to me as I write, borne on the soft, still air,—also another sound, the navy-yard drums beating the signal tattoo, that the lights may be put out and the marines go to rest. I prefer the bells. I have heard them when winter winds were raving like furies, and storms swept madly over the blackened sky. I

have heard them mingling with the thousand sweet sounds of the summer night. In the darkened chamber of the sick, I have bent over the couch and bathed the hot brow of a sufferer. Mournfully, earnestly it has thrilled me by the dying, when, hand in hand with them, I have striven to catch the angel-notes that the shining ones were singing to help them through the lone valley. And in the cold, serene presence of the beautiful dead, the nine o'clock bells have warned me that the day was far spent, that the night hastened, that ere long the bells should chime my last night on earth, and I should hear — oh, wonderfully sweet and precious the sound! — the morning bells of the better land.

In the early days of England the curfew nightly “tolled the knell of parting day.” Then, stern despotism willed that alike in hut or hall the lamps should cease to burn, and the fire go out on the hearth. How men hated the “curfew,” and chafed at the restriction which put out the lamp that burned in the window to lure the wanderer home, and the fire that kept the life-warmth in feeble age or

helpless infancy. Stern hearts brooded over the wrong, and nursed their wrath in silence that afterwards became most eloquent speech. Not so speak to us our evening bells! They demonstrate to all who hear them the reign of comparative order, of intelligent knowledge, of progress among the people.

Message-laden bells! Hear them, heart! The day is done. Hast thou toiled in the vineyard? Hast thou sought of thy five talents to make ten? Hast thou helped the smitten stranger by the way, or, like the Levite and the priest, passed by on the other side? Hast thou held so much as one cup of cold water to the parched lips of a fainting disciple? Hast thou dropped a single seed for heaven anywhere on the barren plains of earth? Art thou nearer thy God than thou wert at this hour last night?

So should these evening bells speak to the Christian. As he regulates his chronometer by their steady voice, so should he look well that his soul be keeping steady time with the bells of the world invisible.

XXVIII.

DEATH OF AN OLD LADY.

H, softly wave the silver hair
Upon that aged brow!
The crown of glory, worn so long,
A fitting crown is now.

Fold reverently the weary hands,
That wrought so long and well,
And while your tears of sorrow fall,
Let sweet thanksgivings swell.

That life-work reached through many a year
The deftly woven web,
With silver strands by sorrow wrought,
And sunny gleamings shed.
The year that graved this line so deep
Was that sad year of death,
When, far from home, her first-born son
Gave up his youthful breath.

These silvered hairs stole softly on,
Like flakes of falling snow;
When first the frost of age we saw,
Not one of us may know.
Enough, for every silver hair
We count some good deed done,
Some flower she cast along life's way,
Some spark from love's bright sun.

How bright she ever made her home!
The sunshine at the door
Would seem to pause, then, laughing in,
Would light from roof to floor.
The very falling of her step
Made music as she went;
A song was ever on her lip,
A carol of content.

Gaze long upon the sweet, calm face,
Beneath the banded hair;
There lingers yet life's saintly grace,
Though death's cold seal is there.
There tarries yet the lovely look,
That, fifty years before,
Made beautiful the blushing bride,
Within the old church door;—

Made lovely as a dream of heaven,
When, with a mother's joy,
She bent above the cradle nest
Of her first darling boy.
The mother-look! Not death itself
Shall fade the mystic grace
With which it brightens, when it falls
E'en on the plainest face.

O thou, whose life for many years
Has been so dear a thing
To children's children round thy chair
Who fondly loved to cling!
All over now the grief, the fears,
The pains and joys of life;
For ever done with earthly tears,
With earthly woe and strife!

And safe within thy Father's house,
Where many mansions be,
Pray only that such rest may come,
Dear heart, to thee and me!

XXIX.

ASPIRATIONS.

CLOSER, closer, Saviour, fold us
In thine arms, till life is o'er;
Fondly, tenderly infold us,
While we tread this stormy shore:
For if thou thy hold dissever,
Saviour, we are lost for ever!

Nearer, nearer, Saviour, draw us!
We have wanderers been for aye;
Mists obscure the light before us;
We forget to watch and pray.
Nearer, through each sad transition,
Lead us to the blest fruition.

Louder, louder, Saviour, call us!
Earthly voices fill our hearts,
Earthly loves and earthly pleasures,
Till thy pleading voice departs;

Let thy words of peace and blessing
Woo us from our oft transgressing.

Higher, higher, Saviour, lead us,
From these lowly vales of time!
List our pleading! Bend to hear us
From the sunny heights sublime!
Higher! till the flesh is riven,
And we soar and sing in heaven!

Ever, ever, Saviour, keep us,
Till we rest in yonder home,
Where no tempter's voice shall reach us,
Where no sorrow's blight shall come.
There we'll cast our crowns before thee,
Love, and wonder, and adore thee!

XXX.

RAINY DAYS.

INTO each life some rain must fall." Beautiful ever is the sunshine, but never more so than when it wraps the earth in a robe of light after a period of storms. It is not natural for youth, with its bright hopes and unflagging energy, to rejoice in the day which is curtained by a leaden sky and fringed by the dripping rain.

Yet I would plead for the rainy day. It brings room for many quiet pleasures, for many joys that peculiarly cling to the fireside. It gives space for thought and reflection, for in-looking upon our own hearts, which we can not so fully enjoy when the flashing light, the sapphire sky, and all the golden glory of a sunny day, are dissipating thought and wooing us to enter the great world without. It brings the

members of a family closer together, and unites them by a stronger tie. The little daughter of a fashionable mother once said to me, —“ I do hope it will rain to-day ! ” “ Why, my dear ? ” “ Because if it rains, mother will stay at home.” Unfortunate little one, whose hopes for “ mother’s ” care and company depended on a stormy day !

Music never sounds more sweet than when beneath each dying chord the low patter of the rain comes in for accompaniment.

What is more musical than the rain itself ? How it dashes over your head, and drifts you along to dreamland, when at night its countless performers take up the song of the stars ! How it comes tap, tapping at your window-pane, the first thing that you hear in the morning, after its monody has lulled you to sweetest rest the night before ! How sweet the ripple of melody which it stirs in the brook, when the drops from above meet and shake hands with the drops that are sleeping ! How it sparkles in the first sunbeam that comes after the “ clearing-up shower,” on the lance-like points of the grass..

blades, in the sweet honey-cups of the flowers, and among the trees with their millions of rustling leaves.

A rainy day is very favorable for the reading of old letters. There is a charm in a bundle of faded letters, paper and ink alike yellow with age, that the most enchanting book and the brightest picture fail to impart. You remember when the little "four-leaved folio" was put into your hands, like an angel-missive, each word throbbing with affection. Perhaps the hand that traced your name, with those little, fond love-words attached to it, has turned to dust in the grave. Perhaps the blight of misunderstanding or harshness has fallen between you and your old friend, and the page you are reading comes back to you like the echo of forgotten love. Perhaps the missive is the first link in a chain which has bound yours with some kindred heart, and which can not be broken till death touches it with his icy wand. You would hardly read over those faded leaves in the broad, laughing face of the sun ; but the

mournful sky and the tearful clouds are full of sympathy.

Our lives are the better for the rain that falls into them. They who have known no sorrow have never felt the honey-dropping balm of comfort. We are nearer heaven for the ministry of grief. Let us sing as we go, —

“Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee !
E'en though it be a cross
That raiseth me !
Though like the wanderer,
The sun gone down,
Darkness be over me,
My rest a stone,
Yet in my dreams I'd be
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee !”

XXXI.

UNCONSCIOUS HEROISM.

WE are living in an heroic age. Now, as ever, are deeds of darkness done, and acts of meanness and littleness, that creep along, shunning the daylight; but all around the air teems with brightness and beauty, and every touch of the wind as it fans our brows thrills us and braces to high and pure endeavor. During the civil war which has rocked the land from end to end, our daily lives were full to overflowing of the heroic. Every bulletin-board, scanned by hundreds of eager eyes, conveyed to the public heart some record of the sublime and glorious deeds that brave men were doing at the front. Every newspaper, crowded with intelligence from the first page to the last, told, perhaps in most unpretending prose, of the truest poetry that ever

throbbed in the human heart. Every camp and battle-ground became a school for heroes. Every modest home, whether under the grand shadow of the New Hampshire hills, or within sound of the breaking, foam-crested surf on the wild Atlantic coast, or out on a rolling prairie of the West, clasped its arms around brave hearts that were nerved to suffering and sacrifice. Old men threw away their crutches and grew young again; old women who had "grandmother" written in every fold of the snowy kerchief over their shoulders, in every ripple of the snowy cap that covered their lovely silver hair, sat straighter up in the chimney corner, as they began to knit for the soldiers. Little children felt the thrill, and were as patriotic as their elders.

Constantly, somebody was doing something that commanded our admiration, and compelled our homage. When Sheridan thundered back, on his coal-black steed, over the twenty miles that separated him from his flying army, turning defeat into victory by the magnetism of his presence and the grandeur of his courage, he

took the people's hearts by storm, and they lifted him up at once to a place among those they loved to honor. When the sweet, solemn, prophetic words of Lincoln's second Inaugural were read in every mansion and cottage in the land, the nation bowed before the man who was raised up of God to be not only our ruler, but our father; and like bereaved children they mourned when he was stricken down by the assassin. The records of the prison and the hospital are filled with lines of gold. None but those who have seen it can realize how uncomplainingly middle-aged men and beardless boys alike bore their terrible sufferings, — listening without a murmur to the surgeon's dictate ordering the mutilated limb to be amputated, bearing without an angry word privation and discomfort, murmuring in sleep or dreams the sweet word "Mother!" while the heart was homesick almost unto death, and the eyes grew dim with tears that would not be stayed, at the thought of the miles and months between the tent and the roof-tree. None but those who saw them can realize how our men

looked as they came up from Libby or Belle Isle : gaunt, wan, weird-figured, with rags hanging loosely around them, unwashed, uncombed, with matted beards pendent from cheeks and chins, hollow, cavernous eyes, looking up with touching radiance at the dear old flag, glad to get home from the house of bondage, yet eager to return to duty in the field. And we need not utter the names of women, tried and true, who went forth from the shelter of the household and the shield of the fireside to nurse in hospital or transport, or on the field of death itself, these boys in blue whom we all loved and honored.

The praise of these men, the homage due these women, are in every heart, on every lip. But there are heroes whose names shall never be known, whose record shall never be written, whose reward shall never reach them in this world ; who must wait till the angel reapers put in the sickle and the last trumpet sounds the reveille at the resurrection. They toil through the heat of life's common days, having the work, but none of the glory ; they bear the bur-

dens, but wear none of the crowns; they feel the thorns, but are not garlanded with the roses. By and by they drop out of life, and out of memory, forgotten save by one or two faithful hearts, and the great world is not saddened at all.

There is a record of these heroes whom nobody knows, but God keeps it, and no eye but his reads therein.

Of such are many lowly Christian men and women whose life is a struggle for bread; seamstresses, who have much to do to keep the wolf from the door; teachers, who never get beyond the little primary school; missionaries, who go, almost unheralded, to climes where the air is poisoned, and the sunshine pestilential; who toil through weariness and pain a few brief months or years, till the Master calls them higher; ministers, whose places of labor are in remote hamlets of the West, where the people are poor and untaught, or in the purlieus of great cities, where crimes or vices congregate; mission-school teachers, who scale the crazy tenement stair or descend into the dark and dirty cellar in search of souls

to save ; all who do Christ's work, in a lost world, without thought of recompense, save the " Well done, good and faithful servant," at the end of the day.

I know a lady whom the world calls by the pathetic title given too often half in coldness, half in scorn, — old maid. She is a maiden, and prematurely old. Her brow has wrinkles that forty years ought not to have written upon it. Her eyes are sharp and bright yet, many hours of midnight labor not having robbed them of their usefulness. Her skin is freckled, and drawn too tightly over the thin face. Her dark hair is threaded here and there with constantly thickening lines of gray. Her hands, once soft and dimpled, are toil-hardened and bony. Her figure has lost its symmetry, and her shoulders are stooping. You would pass her on the street without a thought or a look ; for the beauty of the invisible does not always shine through and illuminate the earthly form.

Yet this woman is a saint. And in the old days there were saints and martyrs who went

through fires of tribulation which, to hers, were cool. If sanctification begins, as we believe, from the hour of regeneration, continuing through the years of time till the rest of eternity is won, then are there many saints who have not yet won the white robes and the palm branches.

Years ago her father died, leaving a large family in straitened circumstances; the mother, feeble in health, a weak, clinging woman, drooped like a vine torn suddenly from an oak; then the elder sister took the father's place. She became a support to her mother, a comfort to her brothers, a mentor to her sisters. She had a lover, but he like herself was poor, and years lay between them and marriage; so she tore her heart away from thoughts that make life beautiful to many women, gave him her friendship, but set him free from closer bonds, and nobly took up her burden, forcing back the thoughts of the future that might have been which sometimes would steal over her. Troubles thickened, trials multiplied, clouds deepened and darkened, but she

was equal to every emergency. Her smile was ever ready, her hand was ever helpful, her soul never tired under the load.

Death entered the household. In seven years, six members of the family were reft away. The sons, who would have been able by their toil to help along and relieve the sister, passed away, one by one, under the withering influence of consumption; the household darling, the baby of the band, went gayly to school one morning, came home with a sore pain in his head, and was fain, like the Shunamite's son, to lay it on his mother's lap. The next day he was a corpse.

Then the gifted, talented sister, who had studied so faithfully and earnestly to fit herself for teaching, who was succeeding so well in her profession, fell a victim to consumption, — the family scourge, — and the mother, heart-broken, had not long to wait ere she followed. Soon two more, a sister, beautiful as a dream, a brother, manly and brave, were summoned away.

Still, through days of discouragement and

weary nights, the sister stood at her post. She nursed them one by one, she closed their eyes, she placed the flowers in their ice-cold hands, she cheered the sad hearts of the narrowing circle. She was a Christian, and through her influence one after another was led to the cross. She wept bitter tears, but she said, not only with her lips, but by her actions, "Thy will be done."

Tell this woman that in her sad, weary life, which has never been lifted for a day out of the commonplace, which is not very exceptional even in its sorrows, there has been anything heroic, and she would raise those dark eyes in wonder. She has never dreamed of heroism. She has only done her duty and trusted to God.

When Ann Hasseltine Judson followed the steps of her captive husband over the burning Indian sands, love lending wings to her bleeding feet and glorifying her pale face, so that it beamed on him in his prison gloom like the face of an angel, did she think of being a heroine? No! she was but the woman and the wife,

following the Saviour most faithfully, her husband most tenderly, unconsciously brave and great. When Kincaid and his wife, sending their little ones home to be educated and cared for in a Christian land, called to their returning brethren as their farewell words, "Six men for Arracan!" did they mean heroism? Nay! they thought but of duty and of Christ.

O shades of the departed, of McCheyne and Harlan Page, of Havelock and Hedley Vicers, of Roxana Beecher and Mary Lyon! The world is better for your unconscious greatness, your wonderful self-denial, your great throbbing hearts, that were large enough to labor for humanity as well as for your homes and beloved ones.

It is a cheering thought that no labor is ever in vain. God sees and notes his children, wherever they toil, whether in gloomy mines under the earth, or in fastnesses of the everlasting hills; whether fleeting in the white-winged ship over the blue waves of ocean, or living from day to day in the whirl of city life. No effort passes unseen. The great Captain has his eye ever on the rank and file, and the

private has an equal chance with the starred and ribboned officer, in the honor-roll of heaven. God sees the struggle and the strife, the temptation and the triumph, the hope and the happiness, the faith and the fruition. He who bent a look from the cross on his mother, weeping in her agony at its foot, who failed not to comfort in that dark hour, will pity and comfort every mother in the world who has need of pity. He who whispered pardon and promise to the penitent thief will save also "to the uttermost all who come unto God by him."

There are those who sigh over the degeneracy of the times, who lament the prevalence of crime, who mourn for the more rigid observances of former days. They take only a partial view. If vice, red-handed, stalks about, purity whiter than the snow, peace fairer than the lilies, faith shining like the sunlight, are also here; and in God's good time Satan shall be bound, error shall hide its head, and the millennial glory shall brighten the sky. The days are heroic now! The age is heroic, and the light that streams over the working, weary world is the light of heaven.

XXXII.

F A I T H.

CLINGING close in the dark,
Close to the Master's hand,
Entering into the ark,
When floods sweep over the land;

Casting thine every care
On One who careth for thee,
Leaving each gloomy fear
At the foot of Calvary;

Calmly falling asleep,
Like a child on its mother's breast,
When perils near thee creep,
And storms have little rest.

On from cradle to tomb,
Following Bethlehem's star,
Discerning through earth's gloom
The hills of light afar.


Lifting the heavy cross
With no repining thought:
His cross was heavier far
Whose life thy pardon bought!

Still trusting all to Him
Who well deserves thy love,
Till the stars of earth grow dim
In the clearer day above.



XXXIII.

THE FIRST SNOW.

HOU art falling down so softly o'er the weary
earth and wide;
Thine airy vesture covers her, like veil
around a bride.

The wild winds catch thy crystals, and fling them
to and fro,
And the forest branches tangle them, O fair and
fleecy snow!

The light and happy-hearted are singing songs to
thee;

The little children hail thee with mirth and sport-
ive glee;

The merry bells will tinkle on "the icy air of
night,"

And many an eye will sparkle, and glitter with
delight.

Yet many a tear will quiver on sorrow's pallid
cheek,

And many a weary, weary sigh its tale of grief will
speak.

To the dreary room of sickness thou art no wel-
come boon ;

For the naked and the shivering thou ever art too
soon.

The pining captive sees thee, and the culprit from
his cell ;

Thou seemest like a dream of heaven, a pure and
holy spell ;

And the sleeping conscience waketh, and the burn-
ing thoughts will roam

To the brightness and the beauty of boyhood's
peaceful home.

Thou art falling, falling softly, on the little grave
so low,

Where we laid our lost and lovely, one little year
ago ;

But the robe thou spreadest o'er her is not one
half so fair

As that white robe of righteousness our child in
heaven doth wear.

Oh, memories of our lost and dear come back to
us with thee!

They spring to greet thy noiseless step with pleasure's buoyancy;

Thou wakest many an echo sweet of dear and far-off hours,

Ere the clustering hopes of friendship had drooped
like faded flowers.

Fall gently, gently downward, O fair and fleecy
snow!

And we will watch thy feathery flakes adrift to
and fro;

And the wayward winds will rock thee, and Earth
will go to sleep,

For the Hand that drops thy treasures this little
world can keep.

XXXIV.

COME TO JESUS.

LITTLE child, come to Jesus. Jesus wants *you*. He does not care how small you are, how weak, how unable to do anything great; he wants you in his kingdom now.

Can you, little boy, be even a drummer in the great army which follows the Captain of our salvation? Then come. Do your task with might and main; work for Jesus now, and he will not fail to see you and reward you. Sometimes your earthly friends forget to tell you when you have pleased them, but Jesus never forgets to set his seal of peace in your heart when you have pleased him. For you he came to earth; for you he lived and died; for you he stands now in the form of man pleading your cause before his Father in heaven. Will you not come?

Maiden, on the threshold of womanhood, come to Jesus. You have beauty, talents, a happy heart, hands that know how to make home attractive, feet that are swift to wait on those you love. Christ needs just such as you are to help along his work. There are young people who will come to him if you do, but who heed not when older persons invite them, who hear the message of the preacher with unconcern. There are mission schools that need teachers; you can not tell how like a sunbeam your smiling face will light up some somber home where there is labor and pain, but little love,—where children and parents alike know not the dear Saviour. But you can not lead others to him unless you first come yourself. Dear young girl, reach out your hand to grasp the hand that was nailed to the cross. It was your sin that made the Saviour “exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.” For you he gave his precious life. To you he says, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock.” Shall he knock, and will you not open? Oh, let the Lord of glory in!

Husband, wife, come to Jesus. You have joined company for a long journey. Part of the way shall be very bright. It will be brighter still if One who met the disciples on the way to Emmaus walk with you. Part of the way will doubtless be gloomy, curtained by canopies of clouds, lit only by lurid flashes of lightning, shut in by sudden storm and night. He who walked upon the waves of Galilee, when the little ship was tossed like a toy by the tempest, will say in the hour of your deep darkness, "Peace, be still," if you but come to him. Come now. Come together. Let there be no division between you at the mercy-seat, at the communion table. In the coming time be ye both at the right hand in heaven.

Mother, come to Jesus. Yours is a high, a holy charge. You have a vocation but little lower than that of the angels. To your hand is committed the training of immortal souls for the sky. As you live, so will they. Can you tell those little ones of the bright world above, having yourself no portion there? Can you teach those little lips to lisp of Jesus, to

utter words of prayer, if you do not pray? O blessed among women! if fashion, or folly, or pride, or the world, has enslaved you, I beg you break the chains and come to Jesus.

Father, come to Jesus! It is your wish that your son should grow up a manly, earnest worker in the world. You would have him honest and true, brave, ready to go wherever duty calls him, quick to answer when his country needs men, quick to respond when humanity demands his services. That boy will be ten times the readier, ten times the truer, the nobler, if he loves the Lord. Come to Jesus, and with you bring your son. The church militant is always in need of recruits.

My heart almost fails me as I say to you, aged sinner, "Come to Jesus." Not because he is not willing to save you even at the latest hour of your life, but because Satan has now such a fast hold of you that he will not let you go without a terrible struggle. What! are you going down, with those white hairs, into the arms of death? Will you let the last opportunity pass; the last

day of grace go by ; the last call of mercy fall on ears that are deaf? Not so! Oh, come to Jesus now! Give him all that is left of your life ; all that is left of your energies : try to undo what you have been doing for Satan, and take upon you his yoke, our Master's. It is easy, and his burden is light.

A Zouave in France has lately pretended that he has power to work miracles. From morning till night his house has been crowded and besieged by a multitude of maimed and crippled ones, eagerly begging to be cured of their infirmities. Upon some he has wrought a partial cure ; upon others, probably upon most, his incantations have had no effect. To all he has spoken with harsh words, frowns, and curses, and there has been no pity in his tones when he has sent the disappointed ones away.


Not so does Jesus. To him, too, come every day vast processions of the halt, the blind, the sin-defiled. He cures every one. He looks upon every one with pity. For every one he

has the soft touch, the gentle smile, the word of fondest love. None ever sought him and were sent away empty. His power, like his goodness, is unlimited. Will you not come to him? -



XXXV.

A BEAUTIFUL THOUGHT.

 SEVERAL years ago, in a room in the upper story of a tenement house in New-York city, might have been seen a mother and child. The mother was washing; the child was playing about the floor. After a while, the child, tiring of its play, climbed up by a chair to the window. Like older children, it wanted to look away from the narrow walls of the little world of home into the great world outside. But, gazing out upon the wonderful sights, it leaned a little too far, lost its balance, and the terrified mother turned around just in time to see it fall.

What sight shall meet her eyes? She does not stop to think of the crushed and mangled mass which may be all that remains of her poor darling. Rushing headlong down the stairs, as

if her feet were wings, she receives her child from the friend who has picked it up, and, miraculous as it seems, except a few bruises the child is unhurt. No broken limb; no serious injury; though the infant form fell from so fearful a height!


Sitting in the doorway, an aged German saw the whole occurrence, — a thoughtful man, perhaps a Christian; at all events, one who could discern God's providence in this case. Taking the pipe from his mouth, he said to the pale mother, "Why! your child must have fallen into the arms of an angel!"

Beautiful thought, and true as beautiful! For "He giveth his angels charge" concerning the little ones that he loves, and sends them forth as "ministering spirits to those who shall be heirs of salvation."

XXXVI.

THE SHINING SEAL.

EXODUS xxxiv. 29-35.

AS it the light of the morning sun
That fell upon thy brow,
When the eyes of Israel could not look
On its strangely dazzling glow?

Was it a beam from the opened heaven
That kissed the mountain fair,
And, lingering on thy stately head,
Left its reflection there?

Oh, no! not these; on that lonely mount,
By human foot untrod,
Didst thou hold communion pure and sweet,
Blest mortal, with thy God!

And bowing low at his awful shrine,
Almost within the veil,
Thy meek face gathered a radiant light,
That made earth's sunshine pale.


So have we seen the unearthly light
Like a crown of beauty come,
When a ransomed spirit has winged its flight
Up to the heavenly home.

So have we seen on a Christian's brow
The sign of the Father's love,
And we knew that his prayers, half-breathed
and low,
Had been heard and answered above.

Oh, give to us, Father, the shining seal,
As onward to thee we press,—
The face that glows from the altar-fire
Of inward happiness !

XXXVII.

A LITTLE WHILE.

 LITTLE while to toil along
This weary, winding way,
And we shall join the ransomed throng,
And sing the endless choral song,
In yonder land of day.

A little while to wonder why
Our souls so often fall,
And our dear Lord shall sanctify,
And take us to his home on high,
To praise his love for all.

A little while to pour our love
On fading forms of clay,
To weep with tears of bitter grief,
With anguish that hath no relief,
And death shall die for aye.

A little while to scatter smiles,
Like sunbeams, on our way,
With willing heart and kindly hand
To help the lonely, outcast band,—
To wait and watch and pray.

A little while to do the task
Our Master's hand hath given;
Fast fleet away the hours of grace,
Night falleth on our dwelling-place,—
Short space to work for heaven!

A little while to face the storm
And breast the angry billow,
And Christ shall whisper, "Peace, be still!"
And, ransomed by our Lord's sweet will,
His breast shall be our pillow.

A little while! Heed well, my soul,
Those words of love and warning,
That, ere thou reach the appointed goal,
Thou go to Christ and be made whole,
And meet for heaven's bright morning.

XXXVIII.

THE PET LAMB.

IN Judæa, the shepherds as they lead their flocks from field to field call each sheep by name. Our Saviour alludes to this in the beautiful tenth chapter of John, where he says, "He calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out."

Some in the flock are more affectionate and dutiful than others. They cling close to the shepherd. They linger near him, and feed beneath his eye. Others love to wander, and they often forsake the rest, and lose themselves in dark paths and tangled wilds, where it troubles the shepherd to find them. But the shepherd does not care for trouble. Up and down, here and there, he searches, parting the brambles to look between them, peeping

through thick screens of matted foliage, seeking till he discovers the truant.

If again it wanders the shepherd has a last resource. He lifts the little lamb in his arms, and the mother-sheep wanders no more, but follows closely by his side, looking up to the fair head and soft eyes that hide against his shoulder.

So our Good Shepherd leads his flock. When one of its number, forgetting the infinite tenderness, the wonderful love of the Gentle One, goes seeking after earthly pleasures, he reaches down his hand, and takes one of its choicest possessions away. Where your treasure is, there will your heart be.

Mother, is your home lonely, because the little foot that made such music in it has gone to patter across the starry floor of heaven? — because in dreams of the night you catch glimpses of the radiant eyes that once smiled brightly into your own, of clustering curls that you twined often round a brow that now is dust? — because your fairest bud is broken?

“There is no flock, however watched and tended,
But one dead lamb is there ;
There is no fireside, howsoe’er defended,
But has one vacant chair.”

When Christ sees his ransomed ones forsaking the shelter of his fold, he woos them to himself by taking their idols to lie in his bosom. Heaven is the nearer and dearer when a pet lamb is there.

From many a little Sabbath-school circle a dear one has gone to walk the hills of light. Teacher, have any gone from you? Let their memory return to you as a charm, alluring you often to devotion. Love those who are left the more tenderly, and let there be a touch of awe as you minister to those of whom the Lord hath said, “Of such is the kingdom of heaven!”

XXXIX.

NOTHING TO LIVE FOR.

HAVE nothing to live for!" said one. Yet she was a woman of real worth, an earnest Christian, full of faith and of good works. Children had grown up around her, to call her blessed. Her pleasant smile made sunshine in her home. Her place in God's house was seldom vacant. Her prayers often ascended to the throne of grace. Why then the exclamation, "Nothing to live for!"

Many sorrows had been her portion. Hardly a year in her life had been without its dark page. The little one she had lulled to rest in her bosom had taken its flight to the angels. The husband of her youth had been called from her side, and she was going down to the winter of age without a companion.

Sickness, too, brought her many weary days and nights ; and, when lonely and discouraged, she cried, " I have nothing to live for ! "

Another cried, " Oh, that death would come ! All I loved is gone ; life is drearier than the tomb ; I have nothing now to live for ! "

Not that the experience of long years had been hers, but suddenly, like a thunder-cloud in a tranquil sky, a crushing grief had come over her, and her heart lay shuddering in the dust. Then it gave forth the desolate wail, feeling as though hope and love were gone from it for ever.

A father uttered the same mournful plaint. He had walked honor-crowned over many a league in life's journey. No stain attached to his fair fame. Prosperity was his constant attendant. At his touch every enterprise seemed to turn to gold. But his first-born, the son of his love, had disgraced the name he bore. The finger of scorn had been uplifted, and the whisper of contempt had gone forth against his boy, and his spirit bent beneath the stroke with the cry, " Nothing to live for ! "

Another, in the prime of life, exclaimed, "I have nothing to live for!" He had wasted his youthful hours in riotous living, and the apples of Sodom had proved bitter to his taste. The cups which he quaffed with gay companions, the songs he had sung in hours of merriment, left no sweet memory, no silvery-falling echo. Yet what rest was there in the grave for one who had neglected to make his peace with God!

Let us not say, "We have nothing to live for!" Life is glorious; it is sublime. Not to us all may it be a woof of shimmering light; not to us all a long, happy success. We must take what God sends. We must do what he appoints. It is as if the father had gone out for the day, giving each child his piece of work to do in his absence: to the elder and stronger the larger plot to weed; to the younger and feebler the little spot to care for; yet to every one his task. So has our Father in heaven set us our task, and the tiniest hand may do its share.

“ Wherever in the world I am,
In whatsoe’er estate,
I have a fellowship with hearts
To keep and cultivate,
And a work of lowly love to do
For the Lord, on whom I wait.”



XL.

FROM DAY TO DAY.

FROM day to day, O Father, help us on !
Help us, thy children, far from home and
lost ;
Stoop down in mercy from the great white
throne,
And succor us, the sad and tempest-tost.

We ask no angel voice to cheer the gloom,
No angel eyes, like stars, to light the dark ;
Alone to thee we come for grace or doom,
To thee, our God, the saints' eternal Ark.

Father, we seek no lavish store of strength ;
Oh ! drop by drop, our daily needs supply,
Till, guided up to Paradise at length,
We thirst no more, the living waters nigh ; —

Strength every day to live the evil down
That struggles in these human hearts of ours ;

To bear the cross, in hope to wear the crown,
All wreathed and gemmed by sweet immortal
flowers ; —

Strength day by day to reach a helping hand
To some whose lot is darker than our own, —
Poor, sin-sick souls, like wrecks upon the strand,
For whom our Saviour suffered to atone ; —

Strength, day by day, to weep with those who
weep,
And more to smile with those whose hearts are
gay ;
With love unselfish, sweet, intense, and deep,
To scatter blessings over all the way.

O Father ! reach thy hand and clasp our own ;
Soft shelter us when evening shadows fall ;
By thorny paths we climb, with many a moan,
But thou, dear Lord, canst rest and save us all.

XLI.

SPRING AT PETERSBURG, 1866.

THERE'S a golden tide of sunshine
Flooding all beneath my feet,
And the air around is thrilling
With a thousand murmurs sweet;
For the spring-time, like a mother,
Nurseth with a lullaby,
With a rippling, low-voiced laughter,
For her children passing by.

All the fields are starred with daisies,
All the mounds are flushed with bloom,
And the winds that stir the branches
Waft a subtile, soft perfume;
All the furrowed earth is heaving,
Pulsing with awakening life,—
Nature's kindly hand retrieving
What she lost in days of strife.

Ah! the Spring when last she faltered
On the Appomattox shore
Hid her face and stayed her footsteps
From the bruised and blackened floor,
Scarred and crushed, and torn and trampled,
By the iron foot of war,
Till the sad earth moaned and shivered
'Neath the weight of graves she bore!

Then these silent meadows echoed
Bugle-call and beat of drum,
And the distant cannon's thunder,
Where to-day the wild bees hum, —
All along the line the rattle
Of the deadly Minié ball,
And the eddyng waves of battle,
Surging round yon low earth-wall!

Here where springs the scented clover
Stood the ranks of loyal blue,
Each his country's fearless lover,
Hero-hearted, brave and true!
Here where these white bones are bleaching,
'Neath the sifted yellow clay,
Patriot sons of patriot mothers
Gave their bright young lives away.

It is over! Flag of Freedom,
With thy stars thine own once more,
Hath thy red a rosier tinting
For the deadly baptism o'er;
Hath thy white a purer luster,
For the saints ascended high;
Hath thy field of star-gemmed azure
Lovelier halo of the sky!

Croon, young mother, croon thy sweetest
Lullabies o'er timid flowers,
In thy balmy wind-rocked cradle
Nurse the laughing April hours.
Softly weave a pall of beauty
O'er the soldier's nameless grave;
Coax the frightened birds to duty,—
Seas of music, wave on wave!

Thanks for those whom baby fingers
Wake to-day at reveille,
Brave, broad-chested, sun-burnt heroes,
Glad once more at home to be!
Glad that sweet good-nights and kisses
Beat for them the night's tattoo,
While a grateful country utters
Blessings on the boys in blue!

XLII.

BY THE WAYSIDE.

IF I only had opportunity, I might do a great deal of good," is often the unspoken thought which comes up in the heart after reading or hearing of some life nobly spent. And so we sit still with folded hands, waiting for opportunities that never come, and the sick and the halt pass by us unseen, and our brother goes on his way with a despairing heart.

There are flowers that are wonders of beauty, graceful in form, luxuriant in growth, and dyed with the tints of the rainbow. But they require very careful culture. The atmosphere must be nicely tempered for them, the earth must be specially prepared, the sun and the rain must be watched in their turn. And there are little, lonely flowers that spring up here and there in wild, uncultivated fields, lifting their

pretty heads and struggling up to the sunshine through rank grass and weeds, or smiling out from the dusty border of the highway,—flowers that have no care but God's, and bloom for nobody in particular, yet scatter fragrance for all who come near them. The daisies, the but-tercups, the dandelions,—the poorest child may gather them unchecked, and learn a new lesson of love and beauty from their fair forms. In the lovely Southern woods and along the roadside, in April the yellow jasmin hangs its bell-like flowers from every fence and tree ; its luxuriant foliage and glorious bloom making the poorest hut in the woods beautiful as a palace. You may meet young girls and little children with arms full of the exquisite blossoms ; little black boys and girls, who can admire the beautiful quite as much as white children can, are not unfrequently seen laden with the same sweet burden.

Our doings for the Master should be as lavish, as generous, as unpremeditated, as these flowers by the wayside. We ought not to wait for great opportunities. Little ones are wait-

ing for us. If traveling, as so many of us do, there may come to us on car, or steamboat, or stage, a way to speak a word for Jesus, or to perform a kind action in his name. He will not despise it if it be only a "cup of cold water." It may be the dropping of a little tract, or the word of sympathy for a mourner. A tired child may be won by a story, or a sugar-plum, or both, for one will open the way for the other. A worn-out mother may be helped by a strong hand that will relieve her for a little while of her baby. A sick person may be aided or cheered, an aged one may be watched over and guided tenderly.

If at home, a hundred times a day the soft word may be spoken, the fond caress or the loving hand-clasp given to help others over the hard places of life. One can not be too careful to let his light shine at home. The Christian should be consistent, loving, earnest, in the family circle, most surely. When we see parents setting before their children by their daily lives the beauty of holiness, we shall see children coming sooner to Christ. When children

who have found Christ before their parents submit themselves to their parents in all godliness and honesty, we shall see parents inquiring for the way of life, and pressing in after their children. It is the wayside flower that blooms earliest, and lasts longest, and comforts the greatest number of hearts.

In the Hospital of the Foundlings attached to the Gray Nunnery in Montreal, I once saw a little girl about twelve years of age, who had lost, through a fever, the use of her feet. For two years she had not been able to take a step, and could only move about in a wheeled chair. I asked one of the attendants whether she was patient, for there was an almost angelic expression on that little face, telling of suffering borne without complaint. "Yes," said the nurse, "she never murmurs; she has learned of the good Lord."

That little Catholic child, a foundling, who had never known father's care or mother's love, taught me a lesson by the wayside. Through my summer journeyings I carried with me in my memory a picture of those serene eyes,

that gentle mouth, and the busy hands knitting socks, while the helpless feet rested against the chair that some kind friend had given, and if vexed or troubled I thought how that waif, with the sweet soul shut in the frail body, had learned of "the good Lord."

"The good Lord!" He is good indeed; not only to his children, but to "the unthankful and to the evil." He crowns our lives with mercies, and we too often forget to praise him. In the language of the old Scotch version of the Psalms, quaint but ever dear, let us sing, —

"For, oh! the Lord our God is good,
His mercy is for ever sure!
His truth at all times firmly stood,
And shall from age to age endure."

XLIII.

DON'T TELL MOTHER.

DON'T tell mother," I heard a bright-looking boy say, as he ran with nimble feet to join the crowd which was rushing to a fire.

The excitement, the eager comments of boys and men, and the strange yearning after the forbidden which is natural to us all, drew the boy away from home ; but, as he went, he remembered her prohibition, and exclaimed, " Don't tell mother."

A good mother is a gift for which to thank God for ever. A mother's kiss, a mother's gentle care, — what have they not done for us all ? When I hear young lips say, " Don't tell mother," I tremble for the speaker. The act which will not bear the scrutiny of a mother's love will shrink into shame at the look of God. Feet that begin life by going where a mother


has forbidden will not easily learn to walk in the narrow way marked out by the ten commandments. "Don't tell mother," has been one of the devil's recruiting sergeants for thousands of years. From disregard at home of the mother's rule springs at last disregard of the laws that defend society and redeem the land from barbarism. The boy who disobeys his mother, and hides it, has taken his first step down hill.

It is better and safer always to tell mother. Who so forgiving as she? Who so faithful? Who so patient? Through nights of weary watching, through days of anxiety, through sickness and health, a mother's love is unfailing. It is a fountain that never freezes in the coldest time, and never evaporates under tropical suns. The love that watches over the cradle is the one earthly thing that nothing can wear out. It will survive the roughest vicissitudes, and outlive the most unkind neglect. It has ever been the crowning glory of a good man, that he reverences his mother. Happy they who early learn to appreciate and confide in her!

A mother's prayers gave John Newton to Christianity ; a mother's consecration gave the Wesleys to the cross. What mothers have done for civilization and religion, what they have written in letters of light on the historic page, what the recording angel has written for them in the book above, is only known to God. Never, my young friend, perform any act which you must preface with "Don't tell mother."

XLIV.

HOW HAPPY I'LL BE.

 LITTLE one sat amid the flowers,
In the blush and bloom of childhood's
hours;

She twined the buds in a garland fair,
And bound them up in her shining hair.
"Ah me!" said she, "how happy I'll be,
When just ten years have gone over me,
And I am a maiden, with youth's bright glow
Flushing my cheek and lighting my brow!"

A maiden mused in a pleasant room,
Where the air was filled with a soft perfume;
Vases were near of antique mold,
Beautiful pictures, rare and old,
And she, of all the loveliness there,
Was loveliest far, and exceeding fair.
"Ah me!" said she, "how happy I'll be,
When my heart's true love comes back to me;
When I proudly stand by my dear one's side,
In the thrilling joy of a happy bride!"

A mother bent o'er the cradle nest
Where she soothed her babe to his smiling rest;
She watched the sleep of her cherub boy,
And her fond heart thrilled with exultant joy;
"Ah me!" said she, "how happy I'll be
When he reaches manhood proud and free;
When the world bows down, in rapture wild,
At the earnest words of my darling child!"

An aged one sat by the cozy hearth,
Counting life's sands as they ebbed from earth;
Feeble and frail, the race she run
Had borne her along to the setting sun.
"Ah me!" said she, "how happy I'll be,
When from time's long fever my soul is free;
When the world fades out with its weary strife,
And I soar away to a better life!"

'Tis thus we journey from youth to age,
Longing to turn to another page,
Striving to hasten the years away,
Lighting our hearts with the future's ray,
Hoping on earth, till its visions fade,
Wishing and waiting through sun and shade,
Turning, when earth's last tie is riven,
To the rest that remains in a fadeless heaven.

XLV.

HUMILITY.

I MAY not be a brilliant star,
To point the wanderer's way
Up to the realms of light afar,
The realms of endless day;
But I may be a little lamp,
With flickering light and low,
To guide the children of the camp
Away from death and woe.

I may not be a diadem,
To wreathe the Saviour's brow,
But I may be a little gem
Upon his bosom now.
The brighter jewels he may wear
Where once the thorns had part;
I'd gladly look upon them there,
But hide me in his heart.

I may not be a queenly flower,
 Within the garden's bound,
Nor in some green and stately bower
 Imperial be found.

I'd rather be a violet,
 With a pure and dewy eye,
To lie where all may be forgot,
 Save Him who dwells on high.

I may not win a martyr's crown,
 Nor wear a victor's palm;
I'd be a lowly gatherer
 Of Gilead's fragrant balm.
Nor star, nor diadem, nor bloom,
 Thy little one may be,—
Yet all the light, the sweet perfume,
 Dear Lord, shall be for thee!





READING THE BIBLE.

XLVI.

DO YOU READ YOUR BIBLE?

DO not ask whether you have read the last volume of poems, over which critics are quarreling and opinions divided, while a few are being gladdened by the poet's life-songs. I do not ask whether you have read the history of the last century, or the newspaper, that gives you the throbbing, warm, wonderful history of to-day; but, Have you read, do you habitually read, your Bible?


It took over fourteen hundred years to write that best of books, and to its pages, each inspired of God, kings and soldiers, statesmen and lawgivers, prophets and apostles, fishermen and scholars, — each brought their tribute. It contains biography, history, poetry, and narrative. It has advice to help you in every strait; it has comfort for your darkest hour;

it is a guide to the New Jerusalem. Other books have been lost in the seething stream of time ; this has been miraculously preserved. Other books have visited a few ; this has gone to the ends of the earth. It has been equally precious to the king on his throne, and to the peasant in his hut. It has strengthened the martyr when the fires of death were hot in his face ; it has been the tocsin and the panoply of the reformer in every age. Do you read it ?

I hope there is no dust on its covers, my friend. I hope its leaves bear the marks of much usage. I should be loth to see them fresh from the printer's hand. If you love it you will read it every day, you will pray over it every night.

XLVII.

P E A C E.

MID the heat and fever and bustle of life,
Christ has here and there placed foun-
tains which ever spring up fresh and free
to cool the thirst of his weary followers.

The clearest of them all is that one over which,
with his own hand, the Lord has written
“Peace.” It flows straight down from the
river of life. It is not turbulent or noisy.
Its silvery waters speed on with a soft sound,
like the south wind over flowers.

“Peace I leave with you ; my peace I give unto
you ; not as the world giveth give I unto you.”
Eighteen centuries have passed since the sweet
words fell from the lips of the Redeemer and
dropped like balm into the hearts of his disci-
ples. Since then how many weary ones have
they comforted ! How many tears have they

dried ! How many death-beds have they cheered ! How many pilgrims to Zion have they helped all through a stormy life, over a tempestuous Jordan, and up at last to the shining gates of the New Jerusalem ! No child of God need be without this glorious gift. Christ left it for us all, and the weakest has but to reach forth his hand and pluck the sweet flower of peace, and wear it henceforward in his bosom. Even in the valley of humiliation, where the shadows are thick and long, and the sunlight struggles through clouds of mist, down low among the sweet green mosses and the waving grass shall be found the plant "heart's-ease," which is but a seedling of peace.

Christ gives not as the world gives. The world never filled a bright cup but a drop of bitterness dashed it. She never tempted a man up a toilsome road, holding the while in his sight a glittering wreath of laurel, but it faded and withered when within his grasp. She has no treasures which the moth and rust can not corrupt, or the thief, Time, can not

steal. She never comforted a soul in the anguish of bereavement, or bore it triumphantly through the agony of death.

But thy peace, dear Jesus, can lighten the heaviest load, can cheer the darkest hour, can sustain in the pressure of trial and defeat. It makes beautiful the twilight of this world ; it will glorify the noon of the next.



XLVIII.

L I N E S

SUGGESTED BY THE SENDING OF A BELL, BY THE CHILDREN OF
REV. DR. PORTER'S CHURCH, WILLIAMSBURG, TO DR. SCUDDER'S
CHURCH, INDIA.

WE send this bell across the sea with many a
fervent prayer,
And bid its silvery accents swell forth on
the spicy air,
Where tropic suns in glory shine, and tropic breezes
play,
We bid this missionary-bell go on its blessed way.
Oh, heavy is the cloud that lies o'er all that sunny
land!
The people sit in darkness deep; not yet they know
the hand
That ever guides the Christian's way, though tem-
pests round him roll,
And safely to a better home lifts up the pardoned
soul.

We, little children, happy here in this our "Sabbath home,"

Would have the little dark-eyed ones to Jesus' kingdom come ;

And when our pleasant Sabbath bell peals on the quiet air,

We'll think that holy sounds they hear, in that far country there.

Oft as our gift, with silver tongue, in far Nellore rings,

May some poor wanderer be lured to Christ the King of kings ;

And when our folded hands are clasped across the silent breast,

Still may its constant call go forth, to bid the weary rest.

Go, speak for Him who came to save, in India, as here, —

Ring out thy loud unwavering call, without a thought of fear ;

And blessed thou, and blessed we, O bell, if o'er the sea

One little child shall hear thy voice, and bow to Christ the knee.

XLIX.

O N W A R D.

BROTHER, be brave! for thy foes gather
round thee,

Foes of thy Captain, thy banner, thine all!

Spirits of evil, unseen, hover o'er thee,

Constantly striving to tempt and appall.

Jesus hath promised his presence to guide thee;

He will sustain thee when dangers come fast;

Faint not nor falter, whatever betide thee,

So that life's battle end nobly at last!

Brother, be earnest! Each day sweeping onward

Beareth its freight to eternity's shore;

Perishing souls, on the tide drifting outward,

Sadly thy prayers and thy warnings implore!

Once they have passed o'er the desolate river,

Once they have touched on the desolate strand,

Quenched is hope's torchlight for ever and ever,

Shut the bright doors of the beautiful land.

Brother, be active! New duties shall meet thee,
Waiting, like angels, to bless thee again;
Sentinel-like, every milestone shall greet thee,
Telling of pleasure to pay for thy pain.
Pause not to rest while thy life-task is weaving;
Bind in thy sorrows like dews of the morn;
Softly they'll shine, till, earth's ante-room leaving,
Star-like thy heavenly crown they'll adorn.

Brother, be happy! thy Saviour is near thee,
Closer and truer than friend of the earth;
With thee when wandering, from peril to bear thee,
With thee to lighten thy home and thy hearth.
Arms everlasting, thy frail form embracing,
Bear thee so gently, when tempests are wild;
Whispers of mercy, the tempter displacing,
Strengthen the warrior and comfort the child.

Brother, be hopeful! thy home draweth nearer;
There thou shalt lay thy worn armor all down;
Rest where the water of life floweth clearer,
Cast off the sandals, and bind on the crown.
Onward, then, Christian! faint not, nor be weary;
Onward till trials and conflicts are past, —
“Onward!” thy watchword, inspiring and cheery,
True to thy Saviour, and true to the last.

L.

WE ARE NOT OUR OWN.

NOT our own! These bodies rejoicing in vigor, hands the trained slaves of the will, feet springing with buoyant step up the steepest path, hearts keeping time with regular pulsations to the march of the hours,—all are but treasures lent, which the owner can recall when he pleases. This magnificent home in which we dwell, canopied by the skies, templed by the eternal hills, and adorned by the rich variety of forest, glen, and stream, is not our own. Our beloved ones, fathers, mothers, sisters, friends, children, are gifts from Him who kept not back from us his own only Son, but freely yielded him to atone for our sin.

Our inner selves, these deathless spirits, heaving to and fro with their wild aspirations and

tumultuous hopes, — even they are the breath of the Almighty, and the noblest endowment of his love.

Our time is not our own. The golden moments, fleeting one by one away, the hours, fulfilling their mission, and gliding by as swift and silent as the snow, the long bright summer days, the cheery winter nights, are all tablets on which we write words for eternity.

Their pages come to us pure and white. They leave us stained by sin, blotted by sorrow, crushed by discontent.

Precious time! Season of preparation for an endless future! What lamentations shall be uttered for thee in the dark land of the lost!

Our way is not our own. What a comfort to know that our steps are ordered, and whether they tread the burning sand of the desert, or sink in the mire of the marsh, or trip through bowers of bloom, they are following our Captain, and leading home at last.

Our efforts, our aims, our talents, our all, belong to God.

Not our own! Changing, day by day, from

the vigor of youth to the weakness of later life, burying fondest friendships in the grave, drooping at last like withered leaves, — the thought should be a talisman of hope. For it is but a step from death to glory, — and then white robes and waving palms! What song from among the host of the redeemed will sound so sweet as this? —

“Not our own, bought with a price, — even the precious blood of Christ!”



LI.

LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

SEE how these Christians love one another !” was the involuntary testimony of many of their persecutors in the dark days of Paganism. Alas that it can not be our witness now ! It is the burden of Christ’s teaching, that we love our neighbor as ourselves. His own life was a long evangel of love, from the hour when the angels sang his advent to the sad hour when from the cross he cried, — “It is finished.” Every action in that wonderful life of God with us is luminous with love. He knew no stain of selfishness, no shade of anger, no sneer of contempt, through all the years of the Redeemer’s mission below. “Tempted in all points as we are,” the Holy One was always without sin. Lovingly he gave sight to the blind, lovingly he healed the sick,

lovingly he forgave sins. He bore patiently the waywardness of Peter, and spoke words of hope to the penitent thief. From first to last, love throbs in every act of Jesus' life.

Tradition tells us of John, that when the feebleness of extreme age was upon him, and he could no longer speak to his beloved flock the truths of God, he was wont to rise in their presence, and say, "Little children, love one another!"

While our natures are so imperfect, and our wills so often conflict with our duty, we must expect difference of opinion and of expression among Christians. But it is surely wrong for those who sit around one table of the Lord, and hope for salvation in a common Redeemer, to cherish the seeds of dissension and estrangement. It is sad indeed when members of the same church are kept apart by feelings of unkindness, paralyzing the efforts of the pastor, and grieving away the Spirit of God.

At the foot of the cross, every strife should be buried, every bitter voice should be hushed.

The waves of everlasting love should overwhelm all envy and hatred. Loving Christ, we ought also to love the brethren. "He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love."



LII.

A S S U R A N C E.

I KNOW that my Father in heaven
Hath a tender care for me;
I know that my name is graven
On his heart from eternity.

I know that he chargeth his angels
To guide my every step;
He heareth my prayer so feeble,
Ere it falters on my lip.

I know that he sees my folly,
My sins of every day,—
Each evil thought in my spirit,
Each careless word I say.

As a father oft chastiseth
The child he loveth best,
Then pitieth him and forgiveth,
And holdeth to his breast,—

So God, my Father in heaven,
Metes out my joys and fears,
Now gives me bread of gladness,
Now bitter wine of tears.


I can never doubt his goodness,
I can ever trust his love;
By a cord that can not sever
I am bound to the home above.

So, joyously on my journey
Henceforth I walk by faith;
He will give me fuller vision
On the other side of death.

I know that my Father in heaven
Hath a tender care for me;
I know that my name is graven
On his heart from eternity.

LIII.

NO NIGHT THERE.

 O night in the better land,
No bitter night of woe!
No weary march o'er the desert sand,
While the shadows come and go.

No sighs in the better land,
No sighs o'er hidden grief,
No joys to drop from the trembling hand,
As beautiful as brief.

No tears in the better land,
Falling in burning rain;
For the Father's gentle and loving hand
Shall banish weeping and pain.

But light in the better land;
Light on the crystal sea;
Light flashing back from the golden sand,
Light in the spirits free!

And songs in the better land,
Swelling out loud and clear,
To the Saviour, whose strong, protecting hand
Hath brought his ransomed here.

Bliss in the better land,
Undimmed by the shivering dread
Of an hour of parting close at hand,
Of the farewell tears to shed.

Rapture and fullest peace,
In the land of light and love;
Glory for ever to increase,—
Night entereth not above!

LIV.

A P T T O T E A C H ; P A T I E N T .

THE pictures of inspiration are perfect. Still fair and glowing in tint and hue, still matchless in outline, still grand and sublime in their depth of meaning, they shine through the mist of ages, as beautiful and undimmed as at first. The sweet words of love and cheer, the pure messages of duty, the trumpet-calls of faith, and the angelic whispers of hope, have been swept along by the winds and waves of many centuries, yet they thrill upon our hearts to-day, as silvery sweet, as stainlessly pure, as when they were first spoken.

“Apt to teach ; patient.” These four words are a gospel to every earnest teacher. Their first lesson is one of love,—love for the work, love for the young, love for souls, and love for Christ. The teacher should be kind ; pleasant

words should drop from his lips, and sunny smiles flit over his face. Flowers flourish in the sunshine. Human buds and blossoms lift up their bright heads and thrive in the light of happiness and affection. That knowledge is best learned and lingers latest which is heralded into memory by the gentle tones and endearing looks of sympathy and love. Deep in the teacher's heart should spring the fountains of faith in the Saviour and love for him. He should yearn to see the children early pressing into the ranks of the church militant, early taking up the cross, early starting in the narrow way that leads to happiness and heaven.

Aptitude for the work requires and implies preparation for its duties. They who would teach well must be taught of God. As McCheyne was wont to say, they should bring "beaten oil" to fill the lamps of the sanctuary. They should prepare the lessons they would impart, in the seclusion of the home and the still retreat of the closet. Earnest study and faithful prayer are the two grand explanations

of many a beloved teacher's aptness and successfulness in teaching.

Be patient with the restlessness and thoughtlessness of childhood, the irrepressible gayety of youth. Chide gently the happy one who has not yet felt the touch of sorrow's hand, or the dark shade of disappointment. Evil days lie in wait for us all, and storm-clouds shall drop over our daily path, ere the weary feet shall reach the setting sun.

Joy is the peculiar treasure of early youth, and its frequent outbreaks should be gently guided, never impatiently reproved.

Be patient too with the forgetfulness that is so trying to the teacher, and which seems inbred in children. Those seeds of truth which we, in our blindness, think were cast into stony ground, sometimes sink deeper than we think. They are lost to sight, but they are buried in the soil. In God's time they will spring up and bear fruit. In the heat of the noonday or in the soft decline of evening, others will sit under the grateful shadow of the trees which long

ago were planted, perhaps in weariness, perhaps in despair.

Be patient in waiting for results. Not always does he that plows or he that sows behold the golden fields ripe and waving for the harvest-home. Not always does he who begins the battle bravely live to see the redoubts stormed, and the flag of his love floating in triumph over prostrate foes. Ours to work,—Christ's to win! Ours the darkness here, the bliss hereafter. Well may we wait for it!

LV.

BOOKS IN THE HOUSE.

A HOUSE without books is but half furnished. It may be up to the highest standard in its upholstery, curtains of the richest lace may drop from ceiling to floor, articles of the rarest *bijouterie* may be scattered in lavish profusion in every room, but if there be no food for the mind there is a painful lack in the house, were it a palace.

Most of us can remember some occasion when we found ourselves stranded in an elegant parlor, among chairs, tables, and sofas, and never a book in sight. How slowly the half hour droned itself out, while with impatient ear we listened to an occasional foot overhead, or a silken rustle on the stair, while still our friend tarried in the unknown regions above us! But this is a mere nothing, compared to

the desolation of being storm-bound for a day or a week in the domains of a nice housekeeper who dislikes a litter of papers and magazines, and who only tolerates, in the book-line, a set of touch-me-nots in morocco and gilding, which mount guard on the center-table. These are not unlike our grandmothers' parlors, very dignified and formal, but with an unmistakable company-air about them that frightens ordinary people away.

One especial house occurs to me in this connection. It is a large, well-to-do house in the country; white, with green shutters, and a broad, inviting porch. Its barns and out-houses are numerous, and bursting with plenty. Around it well tilled fields smile in the sunshine, and seed-time and harvest follow each other like virtue and its reward. Inside, the appointments are luxurious; but the people are not literary, and the only books the house can boast are Baxter's Call, Pilgrim's Progress, and Fox's Book of Martyrs, with an odd volume of Irving's Life of Washington, forgotten there by some student-friend.

What a treasure it was to find an old trunk in the garret of this domicile, filled with newspapers of a by-gone time, — prominent among them a number of *Observers* and *Intelligencers*!

Next to having no books in the house is the having them all in one place, in precise and painful order, like soldiers on dress-parade. Some people treat their books like State prisoners, taking them out to air once in a while, but usually keeping them close in their cells, and under lock and key; others make of them distinguished visitors, and keep them at a respectful distance, holding, perhaps, in the library a reception now and then. Others, still, take them to their heart of hearts; and they become dear, familiar friends, companions of dark and sunny hours, and loyal confidants of many a sweet thought.

Let your bookcases be filled with volumes, and on stately shelves arrange the books that are worth their weight in gold. But here, there, and everywhere, — in sitting-room and parlor and chamber, — let the treasures of the

language be scattered ; here the essayist, there the poet, and near at hand the devotional book, that shall lead with gentle persuasion to that blessed volume which is best of all,—the Word of God. So shall your house be refined and spiritualized, your children trained in a purer atmosphere, and yourself, by a hundred invisible hands, helped onward and upward.



LVI.

TREASURES OF MEMORY.

THE past, the mournful past, has many a
treasure,

O brother! which thy heart has cherished
well:

Love, riches, native land, and swift-winged pleas-
ure,

Still cast around thy heart a magic spell.

All lost or faded, and thine arms are empty,
That fondly folded in their clinging clasp
The joys that blessed, or came, alas! to tempt thee,
Yet withered, one by one, within thy grasp.

Yet better far that memory's hand shall gather
The faint, dried flowerets from the grave of years;
These shall not wound thee; nay, their touch the
rather

Shall take the bitterness from out thy tears!

Oh, better to have seen an idol broken,
And bathed with scalding drops the silent clay,
Than to pass on, without one fragrant token,
A hermit, in some solitary way!

Better have poured the wealth of thine affections
On something all unworthy of the trust,
Than at the end to have thy recollections
All tarnished o'er with self's corroding rust.

For giving ever glorifies the giver;
And he who scatters blessings on his way
Shall find, when he hath reached the cold, lone
 river,
No thrill of love was ever thrown away.

Then let the tendrils of thy heart be twining
Wherever hope or faith an object make;
This to each cloud shall be the silver lining,
This from life's gloom the darkest shading take.

LVII.

TRUST IN THE LORD.

TRUST thou the Lord in sorrow,
When clouds are on thy way,
When tremblings for to-morrow
Fill up the brief to-day;
When darkly brooding o'er thee
A storm of terror seems,
And all the joy before thee
Is the misty joy of dreams.

Trust thou the Lord when riches
Have sped away on wings,
And all earth's gilded beauties
Have proved but fading things;
When all the path life offers
Is narrow, sharp, and steep,
And the mantling cup it proffers
Is brimmed with poison deep.



TRUST IN THE LORD.



Trust thou the Lord in pleasure,
When friends are clustering near,
When home hath many a treasure,
And bliss undimmed by fear;
Oh! when thy sky is lightest,
And not a tie is riven,
Look upward to the brightest,
And put thy trust in heaven.

Trust thou the Lord in sickness,
In languor and in pain,—
The balmy breath of healing
May raise thee up again;
So, when thy hours are numbered,
And hope hath left thy breast,
His love, that ne'er hath slumbered,
Will give thee sweetest rest.

Trust thou the Lord at morning,
Life's morning bright and fair,
When many a field is waiting
To try thy toil and care;
Trust him through manhood's battle,
Though sun and storm betide,
And round thee he will scatter
Sweet light at eventide.

LVIII.

T H E B A B Y.

THE baby is monarch of the household. “Hush! you will wake the baby!” cries the mother to the children as they trip lightly in from school; and doors are shut softly, heavy shoes exchanged for slippers, and fingers laid on lips, that the little darling may not be disturbed in his slumbers.

The sisters steal softly to his side to watch the little fellow as he lies there, floating, no doubt, away to the land of dreams. For who doubts that babies dream? The long, fringing lashes sweep the rosy cheek, the lips are parted just a little, the dimpled chin is as white and soft as a flower, the waxen hands are crumpled up into two balls, and the few stray hairs on the pretty round head are as soft as silk, and, by dint of being often brushed “the wrong way,” are al-

ready developing a tendency to curl. The brother, fresh from rough, boyish sports outdoors, becomes singularly gentle when he drops his book or his tools to help mother by holding the baby. In fact, from father down to the least of the children,—the one who was baby herself for two years before this one came,—all the family learn, every day, lessons of love and self-denial and generosity from the mite in the cradle.

Such a wee, helpless thing! So many months before he will become what people generally term “interesting”! So many months before he will know the use of the little feet that are so pretty and fat and so good for nothing, except for mother to fondle and kiss, as she wraps them up in the dainty socks! So long before the little tongue shall utter articulate sounds, shall learn the accents of love, or the fiercer sounds of anger; so long before the baby-period of unconsciousness, the dawn of life, shall have passed, and he become a merry boy, learning rough lessons in the discipline of life, going to school, playing hide and seek, climbing trees,

and growing, by a hundred experiences and influences, to the life-work of a man, and an American citizen !

Mother, do you realize it? Does it not almost take your breath away when you reflect that the dear little bundle you hold in your arms has been born in what the poet calls "grand and awful times"? He is heir of all the ages; hundreds of years have been gathering and garnering their store for him. He shall, if he lives, take his part in the world as a voter, a lawgiver, a statesman, a general, — better than all, as a Christian man, if you dedicate him now, in his babyhood, to the Saviour's service, if you train him with prayer and faith, if you evermore set heaven before his eyes as first and best. Do not let him slip away from you; keep up with him as he advances; let him grow up to his mother's standard. Do not be satisfied with robing him in soft flannels and dainty embroideries; take care of him yourself. No untried hand, no hand, however skilled, can care for baby as the mother can.

Not long since, I entered a negro cabin. There were children of all ages in the one little room. There was a grandmother seated at the spinning-wheel, in blue homespun, with a kerchief on her head, her busy hands fabricating a piece of cloth for the family, that should surpass in durability "store cloth," or calico, and, prettiest sight of all, there was a matronly woman, large, strong, bright-eyed, and happy-faced, the mother of the brood, with a great, fat, crowing baby in her arms.

"How many children have you, auntie?"

"Only eight, madam."

"And you never grow weary of them? Never have too many?"

"No, ma'am; they always brings the love with them when they comes!"

That's the secret. The Scotch have a beautiful way of saying, when a child is born, "Another bairn has come hame." Come home! Cold must be the heart in which fashion or worldliness has supplanted that holy mother-love, that first glowed in Eve's bosom when she held her son to her breast,—that

reigned in such sweet and awful mystery in Mary, the mother of our Saviour,—that glorifies the lowliest peasant woman who puts on the dignity of the mother, alike with the loftiest queen, whose robes of state are not half so beautiful as the robe of invisible love that floats ever about her to whom God has given to be called by infant lips “Mother.”

LIX.

OUR GREATEST NEED.

FAITH," says the word of God, "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Perfect definition!

Volumes might be written on the subject, pages might be covered with explanations, and yet the subject remain far from being perfectly illustrated. Faith! The radiant witness that we belong to an unseen Saviour. The golden cord which binds every believer to the glorious One who intercedes for us at the right hand of God. The lamp which lights us through the shadows of earth, through tangled pathways and marshy pools, through the thickening mists of the last dark valley, until we stand among the mighty hosts, white-robed and star-crowned, in the Father's house.

"Increase our faith," prayed the disciples.

And where is the disciple who needs not every day to put up that petition to the Master? Riches take wings and fly away. Death enters the home. Sorrows come. The day that begins in sunlit splendor fades into gray pallor at nightfall. "Lord, increase our faith!"

Perhaps it is just the other way. Our bark is floating over silver seas to the music of breeze and billow, while the fragrance of flowers uncounted perfumes the air. Then is the hour of danger. We take no thought of the morrow, and heed not the speck of a cloud in the distant horizon, though it may mean a storm, nor fear that the lullaby of this hour may change into the roar of the tossing breakers.

O Christian, at ease in Zion, pray for faith in the hour of prosperity!

Often told, but always beautiful, is the story of the islander who first left his home in the bleak North for the sunnier shores of the South. As he gazed for the first time on the green meadows and the waving grain, his face showed

astonishment and pleasure. Some of his fellow-travelers enjoyed his amazement.

“Saw you ever so fair a land?” they asked.

“Nay!” said the islander, “there was naught like this in St. Kilda.”

“Heard you ever of God in St. Kilda?” they asked.

“Of God! In my own St. Kilda no one can forget God, for we hang continually upon his arm!”

There was truth in the words of the simple-hearted islander. When a storm comes at sea, and the vessel rocks to and fro, and even brave old sailor-faces blanch, then, as by instinct, the most reckless call upon God. Then the most heedless plead the prayer, “Is thine arm shortened, that it can not save?” As the little one runs to its mother at nightfall, so when darkness gathers we mortals cry to God.

In these days of progress we need much faith. We need to pray to and to depend upon God, who alone can guide the nation into smooth seas again.

“Thou too sail on, O ship of state !
Sail on, O Union strong and great !
Humanity, with all its fears,
With all the hopes of future years,
Is hanging breathless on thy fate.
In spite of rock and tempest’s roar,
In spite of false lights on the shore,
Sail on, nor fear to breast the sea !
Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,
Are all with thee.”

Let us all remember that God reigns, and
let us pray, believing, that thereby we may re-
ceive a blessing.

LX.

THE MOTHER'S LAMENT.

I HAD a tiny floweret, a fair and fragile thing,
That lit up all my summer bower with its
fair blossoming ;

It scattered fragrance on the air at morning's
pleasant prime,
And held its sparkling chalice up at evening's
dewy time.
Its bright blue eye seemed ever fixed upon the
blue above ;
And the angels bent them down to watch the
beauteous bud in love.

I had a bonnie little bird, with plumage silver
bright ;
It sang its sweetest song for me at morning's hour
of light.
It slumbered, at the fall of day, in soft and dainty
nest,

And with a flushing cheek I watched its calm, untroubled rest ;

Its songs grew sweeter, day by day ; a clearer, purer tone

Came thrilling from its tiny throat, and echoed to my own.

I know that oft those silver tones went ringing to the sky,

And the angels bent to listen from out their home on high.

I had a rich and costly gem ; it shone with rainbow light ;

Its opal tints made beautiful this vale of cloudy night ;

So radiant the glory was that to my gem was given,

It seemed unto my ardent soul a passing gleam of heaven.

I thought it like the stars above, but fairer far to me ;

I thought it like the stars that shine upon the crystal sea :

I know the angels watched it, my gem so rich and rare,

So like the coronals of light, that on their crowns they wear.

I dearly loved my springtide flower, my bird that
sang so well,

My many-tinted gem of light, with love that none
can tell.

My Father saw my restless heart, its wild idolatry,
And in his love divine he broke the chains which
fastened me ;

He bade the angels take it hence, my fragrant,
fairy flower,


And take away the bird that charmed each fleet-
winged summer hour ;

Then paled my precious jewel too, but I know it
shineth free,

In Jesus' diadem of light, to all eternity.

LXI.

ANGELS UNAWARES.

H, yesternight there sought thy door a stranger
old and gray,
A man by many burdens bent, and weary of
the way!

If thou, my friend, for Christ's dear sake, didst
gently heed his prayer,
Perchance thy roof did shelter then an angel un-
aware.

There came unbidden to thy soul a sweet and
lovely thought,
A thought so pure, a thought so sweet, its hues
with heaven were fraught;
On airy wing it lifted thee far from earth's sordid
cares;
It gave thee strength; it brought thee rest, that
angel unawares.


A silver song went floating by, a song of love and
light,
It flung its thrilling sweetness forth to greet the
starry night;
Thy spirit bore in solitude a grief that none might
share, —
To thee the song brought wondrous peace, — an
angel unaware!

O little golden heads, this night on dainty pillows
pressed!
O downy heads that nestle close to their dear
mother's breast!
O little feet that patter swift all up and down the
stairs! —
God grant that o'er you ever watch his angels un-
awares.

Come when ye list, come trooping thick through
sunshine and through snow,
Ye ministers of Him, our God, whose mercies over-
flow!
Come gently to our hearts and homes, and be our
sweetest cares .
The welcome to those fitting guests, the angels
unawares!

LXII.

BLOSSOMS.

HAT sight more beautiful than a tree smiling under a profusion of blossoms? Each perfect little flower is a gem of creative power! How exquisite and complex, how graceful and well-proportioned the arrangement of stamen and calyx, the tinting and shade of the tiny cup, and the shading of the delicate petals! Breezes of Eden play among the branches, or toss the foam-like flowers about, till they lie on the ground in masses of fragrant snow.

The sweetest thing about a blossom is its promise of the future. Every blossom is a pledge redeemable after a stated time in luscious and beautiful fruit. Looking at the carnival of spring, we see already the trees bowing beneath their autumn load, and hear the

glad shouts of the "harvest-home." But many a blossom never comes to anything. An untimely frost nips it, a fierce wind blights it, or some rude hand breaks it from the branch.

Children are human blossoms. In the sweetness of their youthful innocence, in the gladness of their opening life and hope, they are blossoms, lovely in themselves, lovelier in their promise. But many a raindrop and many a sunbeam must fall on them, ere yet the bud shall ripen to the fruit. They must have fair weather and judicious training, and God must be constantly implored on their behalf, or the blossoms will be blighted sadly.

Whoever has a little blossom in his house, in the shape of a darling child, has won already a "piece of the heaven that men strive for." Whoever has a little child in his care, whoever meets such a one, lost, perhaps, in the crowded street, weeping, perhaps, in some shelter that is not a home, slipping into a mission school, or tripping along lightly without care for the morrow, should remember Christ's words, — "Of

such is the kingdom of heaven." Let us not shrink from the responsibility that lies on us as citizens, as parents, as Christians, to take care of the little blossoms that shall develop in due time into the men and women of the republic.



LXIII.

THE VEIL UPON THE WATERS.

CROSSING the East River one morning, some years ago, a thick fog darkened the atmosphere. The boat plied her swift way over the waters, but the other side was shrouded in the misty veil, and the city spires were seen dimly, as through a glass.

Beneath, the blue waves shone in serene beauty. Far up, the white clouds piled themselves against the deep azure of the sky, and the sun shone,—somewhere. But all the space between was filled with a mist, thick, gray, and impenetrable,—ethereal as the tissue around the bride on her day of days, hopeless as that which the sad nun binds on her head when she weds herself to the weariness of the cloister. Through the gloom there came constantly the ringing of bells and the shrill whist-

ling of the engine, as the boats with their precious freights groped to and fro.

Christian, is not this like thy life? Out in thy little boat, upon Time's changeful stream, how often the gray mists fold their arms around thee, and hide from thy view the shore to which thou art speeding with every dip of the oar. Far above shines the Sun of Righteousness, with healing in his wings; but earthborn trials dim the eye of faith, and darkness gathers. But by and by thou wilt reach the end, and there no mist shall dim the sweet waters of the river of life.

LXIV.

MY TREASURES.

I COVET not pearls from the deep dark sea,
Though gleaming and bright 'neath the waves
they be;

I ask not the diamond, pure and bright,
On my brow to scatter its fitful light;
I seek not gold from the lonely mine,
Nor aught that can only coldly shine;
For the heart hath jewels richer far
Than the perishing gems of this frail earth are.

I seek not flowers from the wildwood fair,
Fresh with the fragrance of summer air;
The rose may bloom in its queenly pride,
The lily may dream by the water's side;
For others the proud exotics twine,
So the hearth-flowers of peace and content be
mine.

I would not have robes of the purple dye,
That the rich might smile and the poor might sigh;
I long not for pictures rare and old,
That glow when the master-hand is cold;
For the eye of love my form can bless,
Though it wear a simple, uncostly dress;
And the fairest portraits I care to see
Are hung in the halls of memory.

The treasures my spirit delights to own
Are the loving look and the kindly tone,
The eye to meet mine, with trust sincere,
The lip to smile, and the tone to cheer,
The fervent grasp of a friendly hand,
The mirth of a happy household band,—
All that gladdens life by night or day,
And helps the soul on its heavenward way.

LXV.

BROKEN CHAINS.

NO more slaves in America! What a thrilling thought! How it brightens and flames into new beauty every time that we repeat the words to ourselves or our neighbors! No more husbands torn from wives, no more children rent from mothers' arms, no more men and women sold like brutes in the market-place! No more the auction-block, the lash, the chain! In God's time, and in the way that seemed to him best, he has removed the blot from our flag, the one cloud from our national sky. Through the length and breath of the sunny South, — poor tempest-tost land that she has been, — free labor is no more an experiment. It has been proved, and even the former masters would be loth, in the light of to-day, to return to the old order of things.

The slaves are freedmen. They work for and support their families. They hire their cabin in the country, or their tenement in the town, and pay their monthly rent. They have pews in their own churches, and belong to regularly organized benevolent societies. They go to school, and old men and women, with toil-bent frames and toil-hardened hands, sit patiently beside the little children, learning to spell. They thirst for education. The free man's highest privilege, the vote, is for them and their children. At night, when the day's labors are over, they visit each other, trammelled by no pass, and in fear of no patrol. Their chains are broken. Deep are the thanksgivings which those simple hearts send forth to their Father in heaven. Fond is the loving memory in which they hold him who was the Father's instrument in their emancipation.

But,—no more slaves in America? The thought rises, and will not away,—are there not many even yet? Are there not those who love their chains and hug them closely, even while they are eating out their lives? Are there

not some who are proud of their slavery, and parade it as if it were a badge of honor?

There are the slaves of appetite. Usually they are the lowest of all, for those habits which take fast hold of the animal nature, binding the spiritual down, are ever cruel and tyrannical. It may be the love of alcoholic drinks, insidious and fatal, creeping on by slow degrees, till the man loses all self-control, and sinks far beneath the brutes that perish. At first, conscience excuses the indulgence, under the pretense of a needed stimulant; then, accustomed to the sin, she ceases to perform her office, or does it so feebly that her voice is not heard. Health, reputation, friendship, home, happiness, household love, are lost, one by one, and the victim, blind and dumb, only drinks the deeper. Poor slave! Canst thou not break thy chains? Listen to the voice of Holy Writ. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."

Opium counts its thousands of slaves. And its sway is even more relentless, even more dangerous, than that of Alcohol. Once wrapped

in the spell that the fatal drug imparts, the victim revels in a paradise of dreams, only to become callous and selfish, and utterly dead to all the living, breathing world around him. Years go by, and there comes at last the final scene, — a death whose horrors the mind dreads to contemplate: nerves and tissues destroyed, life at its citadel undermined and broken, and to the ruined soul nothing remaining but a fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation.

Tobacco, in its various forms, holds captive far too many in our land. Young men, with salaries which are barely sufficient to provide the necessities of life, spend on cigars sums which, compared with their incomes, are fabulous. In the Carolinas, even women have an odious habit, called “dipping,” chewing snuff, and from morning to night these white women, lower than the blacks, sit with their boxes and wooden brushes, paying tribute to the vilest of appetites.

Vanity and love of dress, — what tyrants are they! How many a bright-eyed girl is miserable because she can not adorn herself so

gayly as some richer companion ! How many a virtuous daughter of Columbia is unhappy because she can not array herself like the courtesans of the French capital. What hours that might be given to the elevation of the lowly, to the culture of the mind, to the worship of God, are thrown away in a vain effort to keep up with every changing fashion, and with the follies of our neighbors !

The vice of gambling, in all its forms, is a hard master. Leaving out its pale, wan-eyed, heart-aching servants, who haunt through the darkness of the night those dens of Satan known as "gambling-hells," what shall we think of the numerous gift-enterprises, lotteries, and chances of all kinds, which seem to have taken such a hold upon the public ?

We can not build a national hospital, nor found a home for soldiers and sailors, without by wide advertising calling the people's attention to the fact that fifty or one hundred thousand dollars are to be given away. Some fortunate one, among the many who subscribe, shall, for his dollar, receive a farm or a house,

a piano, or a set of jewelry. Our churches at their fairs have lotteries at every table, and dewy lips and sparkling eyes and sunny faces beg and pray you to take "just one chance" in this or that thing. Do the ladies ever think how this fosters the gaming spirit, — the spirit that has lured its thousands of our brightest and best youth to crime and prison and suicide ?

The love of novel-reading has its slaves too. Far be it from me to condemn every volume that bears the title, *Novel*. The novel has its own legitimate place in our literature, both intellectual and religious. Some of the noblest works in our language, some which have done the best work for Christ and for humanity, are written in this form. But still, the most unexceptionable novels should be sparingly read. One can not live always upon pastry and preserves. History, poetry, travels, memoirs, — let these take precedence of fiction. When once a young person has become a confirmed novel-reader, all other books become distasteful. Life itself grows vague and unreal, and the pup-

pets of the author's fancy become the standard by which the novice judges men and women. It is hard to descend from Lady Clorinda's boudoir, or Lord Frederick's picture-gallery, to the homely household task, the setting of a table, or the darning of a stocking.

There is a kind of literature which is sweeping on us like a flood, against which our homes can not be too vigilantly guarded. The mistakes and false doctrines of what is called "liberal religion," which is not the religion of the Bible, are here taught so warily, so artfully, under so much gloss and glitter, that the chains are slipped over, and clasped tightly, before the victim is aware. In some of these publications, immorality wears a veil, and stalks on before the reader as did the fiend who appeared unto Christian and Hopeful in the garb of an angel of light. Principle is undermined, evil thoughts introduced, and the soul is blackened and scarred, while the poison is imbibed unthinkingly.

There is one way, and only one, to break these chains that bind us so firmly. On your knees,

poor bondman, on your knees, before the mercy-seat, plead your evil case ; there implore God for Christ's sake to set you free ! Vow in God's strength to forsake the courses that imperil your soul, and you shall finally escape.

But not without a struggle. There is a valley of humiliation which must be trodden ; very likely you will have also to pass through a valley of the shadow of death, which is "dark as pitch ; a wilderness, a land of deserts and pits, a land of drought ;" a place where you shall have veritable conflicts with the evil one. He never lets his slaves go without a hard fight for the mastery. But, trusting in Jesus, and being armed with the weapons of faith, you shall finally prevail.

LXVI.

A LESSON FROM THE BEES.

IT is said that bees are not productive in tropical regions, because the climate is so equable that flowers are blooming all the year round, and the bee loses the instinct of hoarding for a winter that never comes.

So, dear reader, if our lives were all sunshine and flowers, we should cease to gather honey. How often in the day of happiness we forget God! How often prayer seems a formal duty, rather than a blessed privilege! How the heart sends forth its tendrils till they cling, like ivy on a ruin, to the perishing things of earth! Heaven seems so far, and earth so bright, that we do not long for the pearly gates. It is hard to keep close enough to Jesus in the day of prosperity. Our hearts are too prone to rely on themselves when everything goes smoothly ;

and, like the monarch of old, as we look on the towers of our happiness, we say,—“Is not this great Babylon which I have built?”


But let a damp east wind of sorrow scatter our sunshine,—then our souls fail us. Let death darken the door, or poverty peer in at the window,—down fall our palaces, off flies our mirth, our beautiful garments are exchanged for sackcloth; and then we turn to God. No arm but his is strong enough for the day of trouble. No heart but his is warm enough to console for the sorrows of life. No home like the Father’s house, when the world bars her doors against us.

Winter has come, and we want a shelter. Sweet then the honey of the promises, gathered from God’s great field in other days. Sweet is the faith taking hold within the veil, sweet the shadow of the cross, and sweet the hope of heaven.

Let us make honey now, from precious lessons of providence, from holy Sabbaths, from prayer-meetings, from sick-beds, from friends whom we love, from God’s own book.

LXVII.

MY CLASS FOR JESUS.

Y precious class for Jesus,
Who did so much for me!
Who paid the price that justice claimed,
In hours of agony.

'Tis little, O my Saviour!
That my weak hand can give;
Oh, let me win these thoughtless ones
To look to thee and live!

My whole dear class for Jesus!
Now in their youthful bloom,
Ere shadows lie across their path,
Dull sickness and the tomb;
While life is in its morning,
And bright hopes cluster nigh,
May these immortal souls lay up
Their treasure in the sky!

My whole dear class for Jesus!

Oh, let not one be lost,

When Calvary was the fearful sum

Their wondrous ransom cost!

One little step may sever

The parting veil away,

And forms that now are glad and fair

To-morrow may be clay.

For Jesus! oh, for Jesus!

The time is fleeting fast,

The holy Sabbaths hasten by,

Soon, soon will come the last!

Oh, let me toil for Jesus,

As ne'er I've toiled before,

That I may bear a precious sheaf

To yonder shining shore!

LXVIII.

THE OTHER SIDE.

NEVER forget to look for the other side. Many things that seem dark and forbidding would be perfectly clear and beautiful if the causes that lurk behind them could be revealed. The sea-shell is sometimes rough and uncouth, but its inner side is pearl, wondrously veined and polished. The sweet kernel of the nut is buried in the tough and fibrous shell. The rose blooms and scatters its fragrance, though all around it the thorns extend their sharp fingers. The darkest cloud has a lining of silver light. The wildest mountain nurses in its bosom the flowery glen and the sparkling stream.

When friends appear cold and estranged, when icy words fall from the lip, and eyes are turned away, look for the other side. Hearts

are not always what they seem. The soul may be chafing behind the unnatural mask. Judge never harshly, but wait.

To all our trials there is another side. The wail of sorrow breaks forth over some idol that lies crushed and broken upon the shrine of love; but the time may not be distant when the affliction shall become a glory, and we shall recognize the angel hand that led us along, while we held back and wept like reluctant children. This side is earth; here are sudden storms, here are winds that rave like distracted spirits, here is heavy brooding gloom. Yonder side is heaven, whose glory "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive."

LXIX.

THE OLD MAN'S DEATH.

AN aged man lay upon his deathbed. He had spent many weary days and nights in his pilgrimage, but he had come to the end at last, and now he waited calmly on the bank until the angels should carry him over to the sunny shores of rest. Voices of friends fell faintly on his ear, like the distant moan of the wind in the pine-tops, or the pleasant hum of the summer night. Memory was leading the departing spirit, for the last time in this life, through the chambers of her imagery. Once more the feeble patriarch, with the locks of silver on his brow, was a merry child, sporting before his father's door. Again he beheld the wife of his youth, long years ago snatched from his side.

No sad thoughts for the dying hour! The sorrows of disappointment, the heart-sickness

of bereavement, the days and nights of hope deferred, the years of toil, were about to be swallowed up in glory. He could almost hear the rustle of the angels' wings, the music of their golden harps. Soon he would be gathered home to the church above.


A smile passed over the withered face. Faint and fainter still grew the feeble breath. The light faded from the dim eyes, and whiter grew the pallid brow. Low words struggled from his lips ; then came a feeble sigh, and those who stood by said softly, " All is over ! "

What was it that he said ? Simply this : he fancied himself again in the bare little room where his life-work had been wrought, and he gently murmured, " It is growing dark. The school may be dismissed. "

And thou, aged saint, wert then indeed dismissed from the school of this probationary life, from the school of experience, graduating with high honor, and taken up to the Father's house. The darkness of earth was to be lost in the light of heaven. " The school might be dismissed. "

LXX.

WHERE IS YOUR INFLUENCE?

CIENCE informs us that there is nothing lost. The little atoms that float away and are seen no more, the dewdrops that the morning sun kisses away, the thousand dying things about us, plant and flower and tree, all flourish, fade, and return again in some other form. We may not recognize the little dewdrop that glistened in the rose-cup yesterday, when it comes back to us borne on the wings of some grateful shower, yet it is not less the same dewdrop. We may not see the faint, far-off ripple that stirs upon the outer shore of the lake wherein with thoughtless hand we tossed a pebble, but it is not the less true that each troubled wavelet stirs another, till every drop in the lake has moved in response.


So it is with the words you utter, the flitting smile or frown on your face, the thoughtless deeds you do. You may not see the effect of your action, but it is not without its influence. You may never know how far the force of your random shot extended, but some heart or home felt it, perhaps.

We ought to take care of our idle words. Hastily spoken, quickly forgotten, they may have buried themselves in some soul so deeply that the scar will never wear away. It is a terrible thought that the idle words of a Christian may have shut the pearly gates upon some poor soul that shall wander in the blackness of darkness for ever.

Where is your influence ?

LXXI.

THE LOCK OF HAIR.

 LONG wavy lock of brown hair! A tress to fold away in soft tissue paper, and look upon now and then, dropping tears, the while, for the absent one whose head is covered by masses of just such rippling brown hair. Where do you think it was? I will tell you.


Standing in the area of a rebel intrenchment in front of Petersburg, with the hot June sun steeping everything in its fervid rays, down on the yellow soil, hard with the tramp of feet, furrowed by the spade, and hollowed here and there into hastily-made graves, we saw something browner than the soil, something that curled and rippled yet, though rain had drenched it, and sun had bleached it; stooping we touched it. Horror! a shiver ran through the whole

frame from the hand that touched the dead thing, for this lock of hair adhered to something underneath. Just below our feet lay a dead soldier ; already the rain had washed away a part of his shallow grave, and left this ghastly memorial protruding. Poor deceived boy ! We pity thee ; and the more that thy fall was on behalf of “ the bad cause that God has set his curse upon.”

A little way off was a Union fortification, where the graves told of terrible carnage, — ridge after ridge of mounds, without a sod or a flower to hide the naked earth, and not a board or stick to mark the name, or tell who fell there. Yet God knows ! The dust that lies in these nameless graves shall sleep till the resurrection, and never till then may earthly friends know where or how their loved ones were reft away. Beside the soldier’s grave we can but hope that the inmate was a soldier of the Captain of our salvation, and that he has entered upon his rest.

LXXII.

EVENING SONG FOR TEACHERS' MEETING.

HE busy day hath passed away,
Its toils and tumults done,
And now we meet to praise and pray,
In heart and purpose one.

One banner streams above us all,
With love in every fold;
God on our side, as brothers tried
We're 'neath that flag enrolled.

Let others toil for earthly fame,
In deeds of high emprise;
We're glad if but an infant's name
Is written in the skies.

Let others reap the bowing grain
'Neath glowing noontide suns:
Dear Lamb of God, from sin and pain
We'd snatch thy little ones.

May peace in all our borders dwell,
And dews of grace descend,
And He who doeth all things well
Be evermore our friend!



LXXIII.

DAYLIGHT IS GOING.

SO said a dear little boy, the other day, a few moments before he died. The room was light, but his eyes were darkened. A moment more of gloom, and the freed spirit had wakened to the glory of heaven, in the presence of the Saviour, — earth's night for ever fled ; heaven's day begun !

Sweet words of a dying child ! Let them often recur to our memory ! Daylight is going. But it is not quite gone. Work while it lasts. Work for souls, for Jesus. Another year has fled, bearing with it many who were buoyant and glad when its record began. A new year has come, bearing in its bosom great joys for some, great woes for others. Some are appointed to longer life ; others are approaching the narrow house. Who is certain of life ? The child

in the nurse's arms, the mother amid her circle, the aged, full of years and honors, may all have but a step between this life and the next.

Daylight is going. But it is the uncertain day of earth, now clear, now clouded. Death is but a swift, cold night, a passage through a dark hall into the King's palace, the Father's house, where there are many mansions. Cease not then to labor for Jesus! "Thou canst not toil in vain!"

LXXIV.

WORK AND LOVE.

THE secret of success in any undertaking is folded up, like the fragrance in a flower, in the heart that prompts to it. That work which is commenced with enthusiasm, prosecuted with energy, and finished by persevering labor, is almost certain to win for its author the reward which he covets. They who would live to some purpose must live in earnest, fearing no danger, dismayed by no self-denial.

For us there is no Aladdin's lamp to flash our wishes into realities ; no Fortunatus's purse to buy for the yearning heart its wildest dreams. Still, lost among common pebbles, the philosopher's stone, that shall change the gray dust into the yellow gold, lies undiscovered by the

shore of an unknown sea. Effort is the only talisman that can win reward.

We are all too prone to depreciate our opportunities. Had we but the wealth which a kind Providence has lavished on our neighbor, we would be joyful almoners of the bounty of God. Had we the rich gifts of genius, the wisdom of the scholar, the tongue of the orator, we would tell the sweet story of the cross in tones to melt the hardest hearts. And since our Father has given to us but one talent, while our fellow-servant has ten, we are fain to fold it in a napkin or hide it in the dust.

Yet the commandment is, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might!" It is binding on us all, as well on the lowliest child of want and sorrow as on the happy one whose lot lies in a pleasant land, — as well on the youth whose bounding steps tread the morning street of life as on him whose bronzed forehead shows the marks of noon-day toil, or on him who totters wearily down Time's descending slope. What a world of good might be done if every Christian heart took home the lesson ;

if every laborer cultivated his little patch of ground with all the strength and skill he could bring to the task. So did John Bunyan, the prince of dreamers, as in the gloom of Bedford jail he traced the pilgrim's progress from the city of destruction to the city of life. So Harlan Page, whether in the noisy workshop, the busy street, or the quiet prayer-meeting, did what he could to gather gems which should shine in glory. So Mary Lyon, with no riches but the wealth of an earnest heart, and the strength that comes by prayer, performed a noble work for her sex and for God.

Work and love should be the motto of the Sunday-school laborer. How brightly then would his lamp burn, when the winds were wild and the way long! How the feet would linger in the homes of want and sorrow, and the eyes dim with tears of sympathy at the bedside of pain and distress! How tenderness and charity would brim over and sweep beyond our immediate circle, and reach even the uttermost, for whom Christ has a corner in his heart!

Loving hearts make willing hands. One of

Napoleon's veterans said to the surgeon who was probing his wounded side, "A little lower, and you will find the Emperor!" So should it be with us. Christ in our hearts, Christ-like will be our lives.



LXXV.

ONLY AN HOUR.

ONLY an hour," cried a merry child,
As she bounded off to play, —
"I must hie to the nook by the shady
brook

For pebbles and flowerets gay!
I must seek in the trunk of the hollow tree
For moss to adorn my bower;
How much of pleasure there may be
In one short sunny hour!"

"Only an hour!" a wanderer said,
As he sprang to his native shore,
"Ere I lift again, as in early days,
The latch of my father's door;
Ere I feel my mother's heart-warm kiss,
And clasp my father's hand,
And look around, with a thrill of bliss,
On our happy, household band."

“Only an hour! a fleeting hour!”

Said one who was near to heaven,
“Ere I cast aside this sin-stained garb,
For the robes of the forgiven.

I can hear the sounds of the river of life,
And the dash of the crystal sea:
Only an hour, a fleeting hour,
And my weary soul will be free!”


Only an hour, at flush of morn,
Only an hour, at eve,—
And we cast away the gift sublime,
And never wait to grieve.
We fling it away and hasten on
With a careless laugh and tone,
Nor mourn that we’ve lost in life’s heaving sea
A gem that was all our own.

Only an hour, a little hour!
Yet many a life has fled,
And a numerous host has joined the ranks
Of the calm and silent dead;
Many a noble thought has flown
On a mission of truth and love,
And many a beautiful thing has come
From our Father’s home above.

Oh! cherish them well, the angel-band,
Who weave the circling day,
Stamp them with writing deep and pure,
Speed them with love away.
They are bearing you fast to another land,
Where never a storm may lower,
Where no harp-notes of joy or wail of woe
Measure the time by an hour.

LXXVI.

POPLAR GROVE CHURCH.

 FEW miles from Petersburg stands Poplar Grove Church. It was built during the last year of the war by a portion of General Meade's army, and that officer's headquarters were close beside it. The church, which is large and very beautiful, is constructed of the boughs of trees; and roof, walls, and spire have a graceful, airy appearance which suits well the fair landscape that stretches for miles around. At the same time, its foundations are broad and strong, and this sanctuary in the camp might hold with ease a large assembly of worshipers.

Such an assembly it has held many a time during the months of the past. Standing in its shady porch, beneath the whispering poplar-trees, one might there have heard the hurrying

tramp of men, the shrill tones of command, the silvery blast of the bugle, or the deep bass of the drum. Perhaps the hoarse thunder of the cannon, the sharp rattle of the musket, or the fiendish whiz of the shell, might often have reached the ear. Sometimes, at nightfall, the glowing camp-fires have thrown their red light upon groups of blue-coated veterans who met around the genial blaze to tell their stories and sing their songs of home. And as far as the eye could reach, it might dwell on a white shimmer of canvas, and the ever shifting, ever changing scenes of army life.

To-day, how changed ! A mighty congregation is gathered within sight of Poplar Grove Church, but through all its vast ranks there is neither sound nor motion. Rank upon rank, row upon row, regiment upon regiment,—all upon their arms in the still, deep slumber of death. Never more shall morning wake this dreamless army with its rosy fires. Never more shall trumpet rouse them till the last trump shall sound, and the dead, small and great, shall come forth and stand in the presence of God.

Most appropriately, the government has selected this spot as a National Cemetery. From the vast extent of ground where our men marched and suffered and died their remains are being gathered and brought here for honorable sepulture. Buried hastily where they fell, by the wayside, or in the red field of strife, many have left no trace, and over such—and they are hundreds—this brief epitaph is inscribed: “Unknown U. S. Soldier, from — farm or fort,” &c. To us this seemed very touching. Over many graves are placed the name and regiment of the deceased, and these can of course be removed, if friends desire, to graves among their kindred. Nearly thirty thousand soldiers will be laid here before the work is completed.

As we rode back to Petersburg from the little church and the vast congregation, the light of the setting sun slanted down on the October landscape. All was quiet, but in broken fences and bare fields and ruins, where had once been stately homes, we realized that here had been the harsh hand of war. Still more did we real-

ize it, when, the next morning, standing in the crater where the mine explosion occurred, we were told that from beneath our feet nine hundred mutilated bodies had been taken. And lo ! as we looked among the remains of canteens, haversacks, and clothing, we beheld two ghastly skulls, that seemed to stare in our faces. Sadly we turned away, glad that we still have a country, but lamenting that the flower of the land has fallen in the strife.

LXXVII.

THE OLD CLOCK.

IT was the last night of the year. A few more measured ticks of the clock, and the last moan of December would have died on the wild winds of the storm. Outside, the snow was falling, white and soft, as if it were weaving a winding-sheet for the departing year, and the tempest was singing a requiem. Inside, the fire burned brightly, the cheerful gas-light cast a spell of beauty about the cozy household room, and the curtains, draping the windows, excluded the cold that reigned without.

It was my duty to wind the clock. Its tick was somewhat fainter than usual, and it seemed as if the faithful monitor whose voice had sounded so many years in our house was about to be silent. I wound it up, and the voice

gained new strength, ticking, ticking solemnly, as if it would say, "Prepare to meet thy God!"

Seventy years ago the dear old clock, then fresh and new from its maker's hands, had begun its labors of love. To three generations it had ministered; for a reverend grandsire had often gazed upon its face, and a father and mother, now aged, had treasured it among their earliest household effects. As children we had watched it many a time, when its record told how long we might stay in-doors, and when we might rush out into the glad air and sunlight. It had pointed to the hour of morning and evening prayer; we had gone to school when its warning finger pointed to nine, and on the holy day its steady voice kept time to the silvery chime of the church-bells. It had not forgotten to note the hour when a new life had entered the home, nor had it paused when a loved one was borne away from our band. Dear old clock! how smilingly it had looked on the bridal scene; how cheerfully on the youthful merry-making and happy festive gathering of friends! And now, when the hand of change

had been busy about our idols, sprinkling snow-flakes on the raven curls of one, writing wrinkles on the smooth brow of another, the old clock in the corner, venerable with age, but in nothing altered, still held its honored place in our house.

Honored ! yes, far more than the latest Parisian novelty, in the shape of bronze or marble, that adorns the drawing-room. Old mahogany clock of my ancestors, type of the solidity, the uprightness, the real worth of the men of days gone by, in these days of extravagance and show I can not help but honor thee !

Thou hast taught me, during these years, the value of consistency. As thou markest the hours, not by fits and starts, but minute by minute, with unwearied patience through the livelong year, so should they who wait on the Lord be patient and constant in their service. Too many of us are earnest only while the glow of our first love lasts, degenerating finally into that lukewarm state which is a grief to our Saviour. Others are fervent and laborious spasmodically, relaxing effort whenever a world-

breeze sweeps coldly over the sky. Others fall asleep, and then enters the enemy to sow tares.

Christian friends, let us watch and pray ! Many eyes are upon us ; Christ from his throne of intercession looks on his friends with eyes of tender love ; angels are looking on ; fellow-Christians behold ; hosts of unconverted ones gaze with anxious interest. Let us try to be consistent. Let us give forth no ignis fatuus gleam, but rather the steady light of the beacon. Let us “stand fast by the maidens of Boaz,” and glean in no strange fields. Let us be found in our own seat in the Sabbath school, in our own congregation on the Lord’s day, in our own little circle at the prayer-meeting, — doing good in some sphere, however humble, but make it our own. We love the old clock none the less that it has kept in its own corner for seventy years.

“ One sweetly solemn thought
Comes to me o’er and o’er :
I’m nearer my home in heaven to-day
Than ever I’ve been before !

Nearer my Father's house,
Where the many mansions be,
Nearer the great white throne,
Nearer the jasper sea.

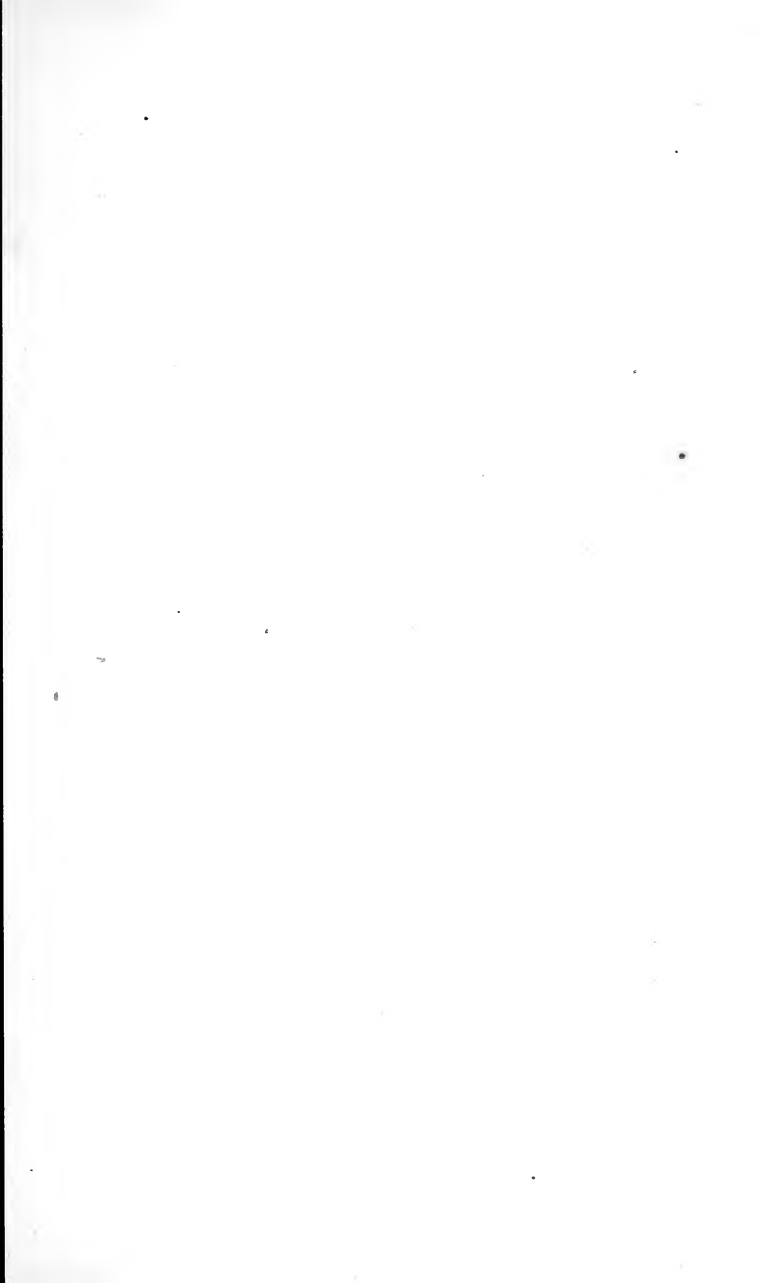
Nearer the bound of life,
Where we lay our burdens down,
Nearer leaving my cross,
Nearer wearing my crown.

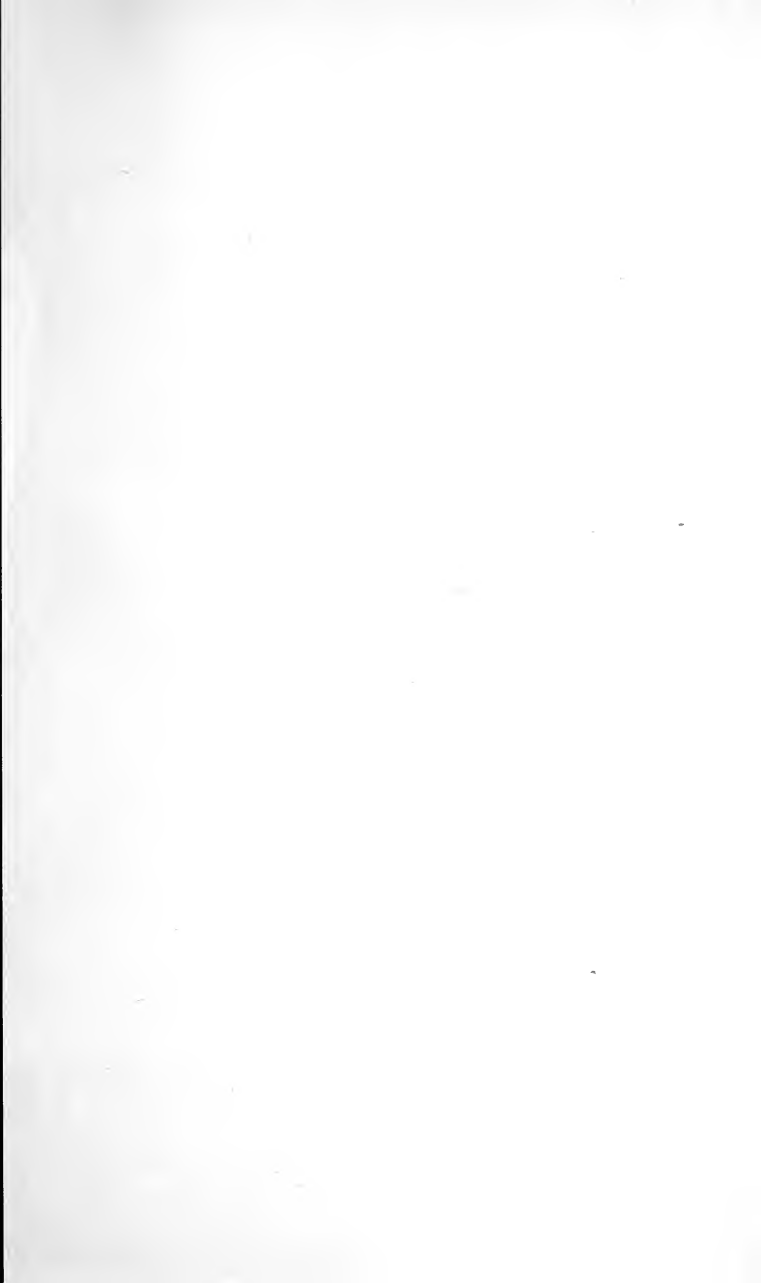
But lying darkly between,
Winding down through the night,
Is that dim and unknown stream
Which leads at last to light.

Father ! perfect my trust,
Strengthen my feeble faith !
Let me feel as if I trod
The shore of the river Death.

For even now my feet
May stand upon its brink ;
I may be nearer my home,
Nearer now, than I think ! ”

THE END.





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